

Marxism Today

SPECIAL ISSUE

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Margaret Thatcher

Woman
Ideologue
Strategist
Risk-taker
Confrontational
Populist
Dangerous
Provocative
Abrasive
Dynamic
Power-dresser
Blunt
Sharp
Major



John Major

Man
Technocrat
Pragmatist
Play-safe
Consensual
Politician
Safe
Soporific
Smooth
Dull
Grey suit
Diplomatic
Flat
Minor


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The End of Radicalism

The Tories In The Nineties

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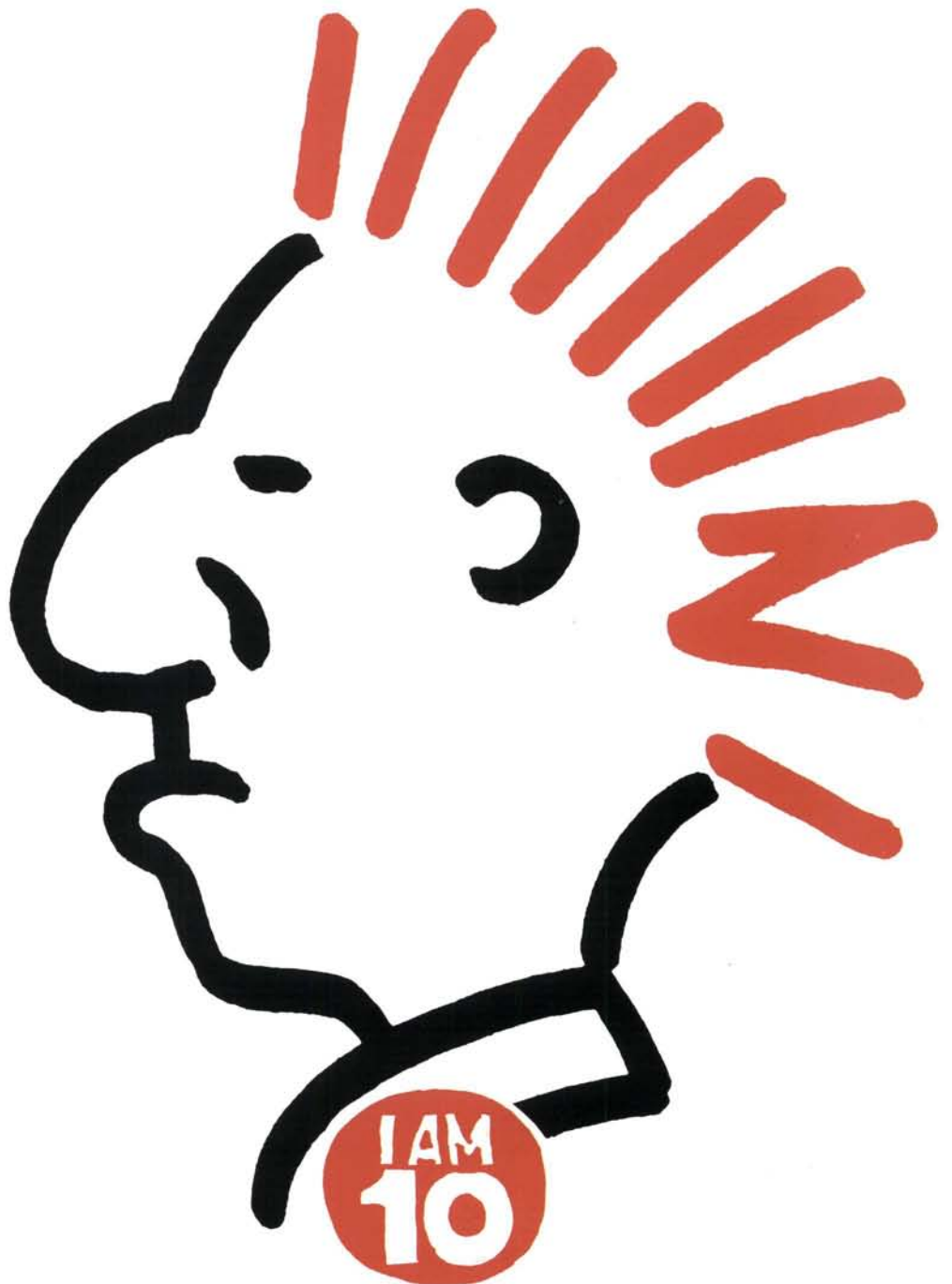
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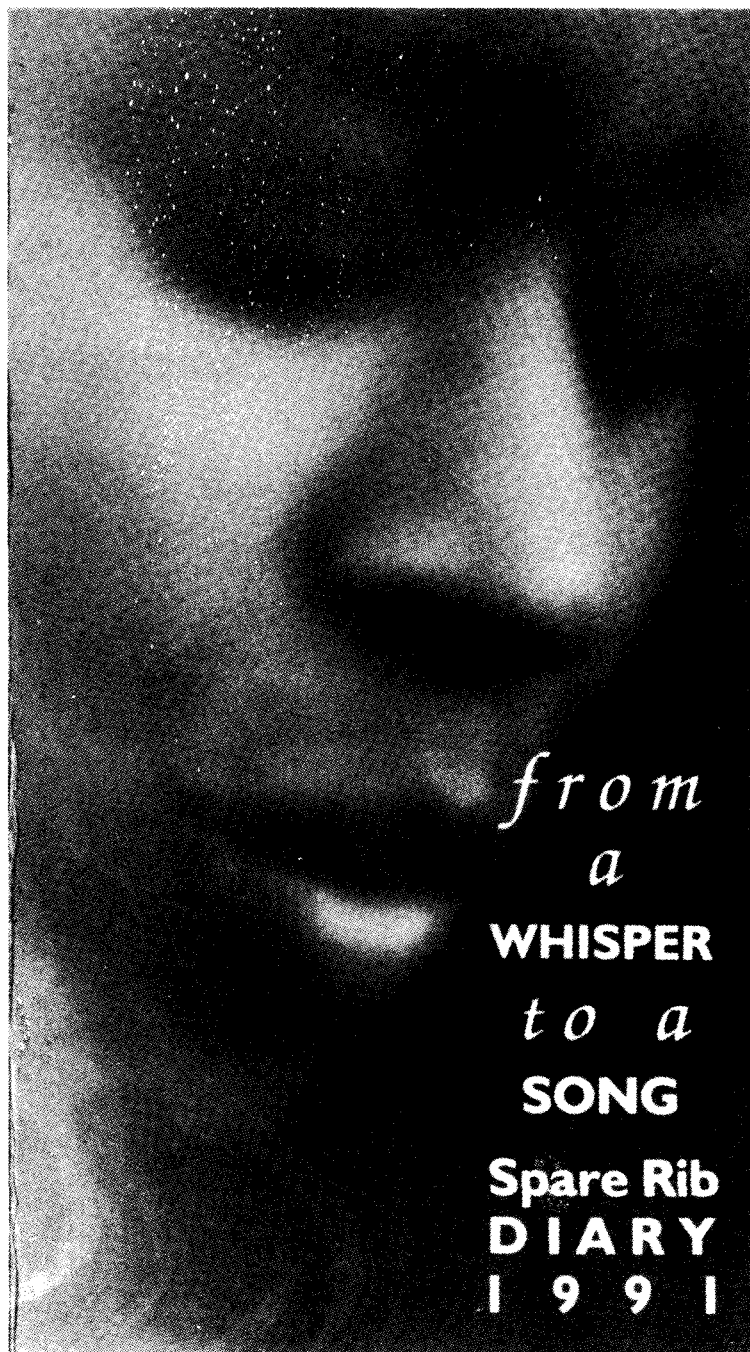


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Martin Jacques looks beyond Thatcherism

A Major Change



Select Cartoon: Nick Newman

An era is over. Margaret Thatcher, the most dominant peacetime prime minister this century, has gone. Though we still have little idea of what a Major government will be like, all the early signs are that in important respects it will be different from those of Mrs Thatcher. For one thing the radicalism which was their hallmark is certainly over. It will be a long time before we see their like again, from left or right. The long retreat from Thatcherism has commenced. We are moving back to a world of consensus. Dry economics and a wet social policy will rule the roost.

It took Labour well nigh a decade to find a way of dealing with Thatcherism. For just over a year it held the electoral initiative. Now that strategy looks quite inadequate to deal with what is a new ballgame. It relied upon the unpopularity of Thatcher, not the appeal of Labour. It was passive not active, negative rather than positive.

Of course, it may be that Major will be unable to escape from the unpopularity of the Thatcherite era. This is clearly Labour's hope. The economic problems will prove too acute; the neglect of the social infrastructure too pervasive; the legacy of the poll tax too divisive. Then there are the imponderables like a Gulf war. But Labour would be foolhardy indeed to rely on this. Yet so far there is little sign that it has recognised the scale of the change that has taken place. It still seems to think that it is fighting the same enemy. It appears to believe its own propaganda that Major is simply son of Thatcher.

It is instructive to remember the French experience. Perhaps the nearest west-European parallel to Thatcher was De Gaulle. Like Thatcher, he transformed the parameters of

French politics. He held office for an equivalent length of time. And when he went in 1969, he was similarly unpopular. Then the long retreat from Gaullism began. But he was succeeded by Pompidou and then by Giscard, both of whom were products of the Gaullist tradition. It was over a decade before the Left were to assume power.

Labour would be wrong to think that the recent unpopularity of Thatcher means that the country has rejected that Thatcherite legacy in toto and, furthermore, holds the Tory Party responsible for it. Indeed, the danger for Labour is that precisely as a result of the Thatcherite era, the electorate now sees the Tory Party as the natural party of government, as happened in France with Gaullism, and will be happy to see a social-democratic readjustment presided over by the Tories rather than Labour.

If Labour fails to recognise the possibility of this, then it will fail to make the necessary changes to its strategy. But Labour's problem is more serious than that. It is now required to make a positive appeal, to win support on its own merits rather than the demerits of the Tories. Yet the painful rethink of the last three years has hardly equipped it to do this. The emphasis has been on excision and positioning rather than any new sense of vision or project. What does Labour stand for? It is a question which will grow more and more insistent between now and the next election. ●

Beatrix Campbell talks to Emma Nicholson

Hearts Of Gold



Emma Nicholson is Conservative MP for Devon West and Torridge. She supported Michael Heseltine in the leadership challenge

Why did you take the risk?

I took the steps I took in terms of pressing for change of leadership in the Conservative Party, and thereby of prime minister, because of a build-up of personal concern on the community charge, on our relationship to Europe and of the difficulties of the individual backbenchers, influencing policies directly affecting our constituents.

Why did the revolt on specific issues have to become a revolt against a leader. Why couldn't the dissent be resolved democratically within the party?

It would have been the better decision in terms of a less acute transition. I think any government has very clear channels through which opinions are transferred and those channels have become too departmentalised. Everybody was appointed to stick to their own brief and not comment on anybody else's. One of the most interesting things that John Major has done, which I don't think has yet been widely noticed, is that he has authorised ministers to talk across their briefs. I believe that maybe this is the single most important thing he has done.

Were you afraid for your political future when you expressed your dissent in a culture that was very very loyal?

When I believed that my privately expressed concerns were not getting the response that my constituents needed, I talked privately with ministers and it became apparent to me that the problem was too large. Eventually I said something that got picked up publicly.

You'd been very loyal before... did you feel there would be consequences?

I knew that my actions would inevitably make some of my colleagues feel that I was being unsupportive of the government...

Why did you then move towards Heseltine?

Fairness is the kernel of my belief in public service.

That's not a Thatcherite term — fairness — is it? Service, fairness — these are words from an older language, aren't they?

I think they're something from a newer language. I think recognition that everyone must have equal opportunities is the newest concept of all. It's old to live steeped in tribal law and push

outside the pale anybody who isn't the same as you.

Thatcher wasn't very tolerant of difference, was she?

She was criticised for tolerating difference. Difference in lifestyles in her cabinet. She was very forgiving...

... of men, but not tolerant at large. If we're thinking of sexual politics, she was illiberal and tended to support regressive and repressive bits of legislation.

But you could say she didn't allow private morality to dictate who should or should not perform a public task.

And yet, private morality was supposed to be at the centre of the Thatcherite project.

In terms of service to the community, yes. In terms of reaching outward, if you remember her methodist upbringing, in terms of wealth itself not being a bad thing, but how you used wealth. That's a very fair concept.

You're kidding us! What is very interesting is that Thatcherism, which is nothing if not radical, had an argument with society, felt it had a mandate even if it didn't have a majority, for change.

Yes, I felt that there was insufficient change, that perhaps was another motivation for me.

What did you want?

Privatising the Bank of England, for example. I would like to remove government intervention as far as one can on the setting of interest rates.

Why did you support Heseltine then, who is a state interventionist, a corporatist?

Because we can't leave our industry at a disadvantage internationally, because we need those contracts, we need to compete. We want to reduce intervention internationally — hence our desire to get more people into Gatt, hence our desire to bow to the pressures from the USA and have 30% cuts in farm prices. We need to be in the real world, while at the same time working as hard as possible to enlarge free trade.

But why did I support Heseltine? On a practical basis, he was the only person who stood against the prime minister. I felt as if we were running into a siding in the last 18 months. And I believe that a unique opportunity had arisen in that we could have a change without recourse to a general election.

What will the new order be? Will it be Thatcherite, post-Thatcherite, what would post-Thatcherism be anyway?

My key needs for change are already

being addressed — one is the community charge. Michael Heseltine has clearly given himself 24 months to do it, and is reaching out to the other side to seek ideas. One of the weaknesses of modern government in the United Kingdom is that it has to be like a football match, one side against another. Opportunities for joint participation are rare indeed, and never on policy issues.

Secondly the approach to Europe has already moved right back to where it ought to be. The Ridley interview was the trigger, together with Mrs Thatcher's statement at the end of July, that that was the last word on the community charge.

Was it Howe who in the end detonated everything?

Ridley was the rock, and Howe was the boulder. His speech was unique. He'd never made a speech like it in his life.

Who did you feel close to in that time?

Geoffrey Howe, without a doubt. But I reached my decision in isolation. I was not part of Mr Heseltine's team. Once I had reached my decision, I alerted number ten Downing Street, five days before the first ballot, and I also told Michael Heseltine. I then went home to consult in the constituency, looking for a way out, looking for the one argument that would pin me to Mrs Thatcher's train. I couldn't find it.

Did you talk to any of the other women? Have they been coherent as a group, the Conservative women?

We have started having regular dinners, and that's a new initiative. They're organised by Dame Jill Knight, one of the women who should have been made a parliamentary private secretary or a junior minister. It's women like her I weep for. That I think is the tragedy of those years. Perhaps women were so rare that nobody gave them the first hand up the ladder.

And Mrs Thatcher didn't really lend a hand, did she? Why not?

I cannot tell. You see it's been exceptionally difficult for women to get into power on the Conservative ticket. Labour somehow seem to have overcome to a greater measure than the Conservatives that problem. The result is that we have a higher quality of Conservative woman MP than the equivalent man.

What did you feel about the way that Mrs Thatcher finally resigned: there was this constant reference to the march of the men in the grey suits. It seemed for the first time that the corporate power of men was

being represented as exactly that.

I had no anticipation that Mrs Thatcher would resign at all, that the votes were melting around her. Perhaps had we all at different levels spoken earlier, things would have been sorted out without this.

Doesn't that suggest a kind of corruption of thought?

It's a failure of British culture. I have been feeling that we need a new mandate for the next election.

How are we to understand the dominant ideology in current conservative thinking?

Capitalism with a heart.

A heart of what? Stone?

Hearts aren't of stone in real life. Hearts are warm living things. A free market with a social philosophy.

Does that make you feel retrospectively critical, and indeed self-critical, about the priorities of Thatcherism?

I am critical only that privatisation was so slow. Take the finance minister of Czechoslovakia, he said the other day, I have 42,000 industries to privatise. Over ten years Mrs Thatcher has privatised ten. We were too slow, had we been faster, I believe that impetus would have given us wider breadth of imagination – to see the needs of the poor, for example.

Of whom there are now many more.

It depends how you define it. The poverty level is now shifting...

Sure, but it always was...

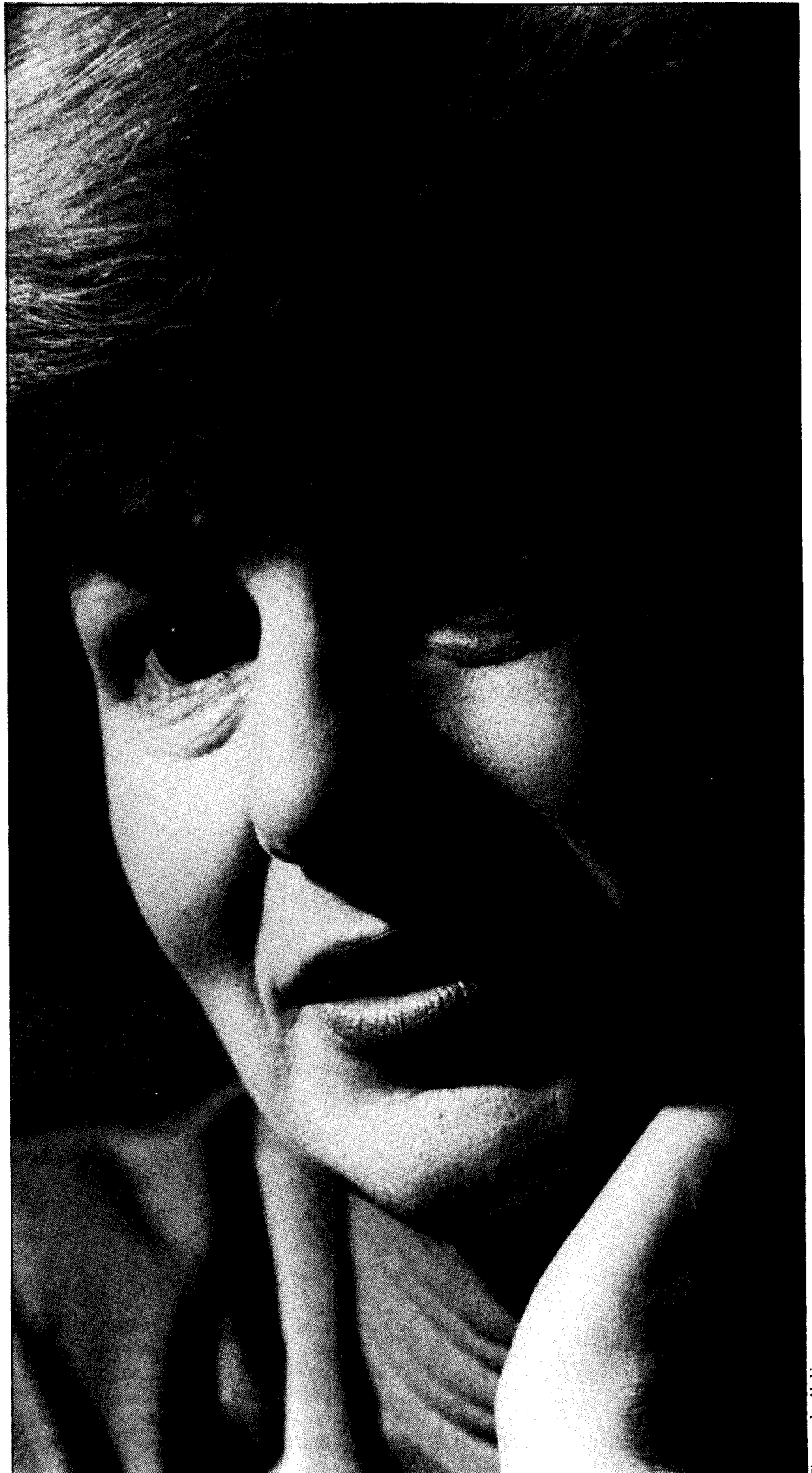
No it wasn't, not really before the advent of the Child Poverty Action Group. My concern is the knowledge that original government figures were incorrect, which was a devastating blow to me at the end of July. The system created incorrect figures which enabled us to say that there were fewer pensioners and the standard of living of the bottom fifth increased at a faster rate than the remainder of the population. It was not true.

One last question. Why did Mr Major make such an extraordinary mistake in appointing no women?

I am unhappy. Linda Chalker deserved that post.

It was astonishing that Major could not register that it now mattered to people that there be women in government.

Well, the Conservative Party like any other political party is an imperfect instrument. We have to refine it. Mr Major is not God.●



Photography: Abel Lagos

"NEWS OF OUR DEATH IS PREMATURE"

OUT WITH THE OLD

"1989 marked the end of an era. The political project of 1917 ended in disaster."

"Perestroika and Glasnost have exposed and opposed what it had become; stagnant, corrupt and repressive."

"The days of the Party being a machine that carried out directives from the EC are long over."

"Drop Marxism-Leninism."

"Replace democratic centralism."

"The environmental crisis has exposed the deeply flawed nature of a rigid Marxist focus on the politics of production."

IN WITH THE NEW

"Confidently engaging with the new will be risky, challenging and uncertain."

"Society needs to be sustainable, not only in terms of the environment but in terms of distribution of wealth."

"If we want to contribute to building an empowering society we must ourselves become an empowering organisation."

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Judy Dempsey finds chaos in the Balkans **Out On A Limb**

One year after the revolutions which toppled the communist regimes from power, new divisions are taking place between eastern and western Europe and within eastern Europe itself. The countries of eastern Europe never had deep feelings of mutual solidarity. Age-old antipathies were articulated after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire in 1918. But after the second world war, unity prevailed in the interests of communist solidarity. Today, that unity has disappeared.

The emerging divisions have political and historical roots. As far back as the 1950s, Western governments' attention was primarily focused on 'central Europe.' These countries had articulate, independent opposition movements. They had small but vibrant intellectual communities. They had active diasporas. It is these opposition movements that now nervously hold the reins of power. But at least Western governments sympathise with them.

The Balkan countries – with the exception of Yugoslavia – never had such luck. History was partly responsible. Romania and Bulgaria inherited centuries of misrule and corruption. Promises of land reform during the period between the two world wars evaporated as soon as the hapless peasantry voted in corrupt governments during repeatedly rigged elections.

After 1945, the communists embarked on a rapid and massive programme of industrialisation and modernisation. But it was the peasantry in the Balkans which was the social stratum that facilitated this programme. They were uprooted from the land into large-scale enterprises. The consequences were two-fold. First, an artificial working class was created. Precisely because it was artificial, it had no indigenous values. One foot was rooted in the city, the other on the land.

The second consequence of this industrialisation was the creation of an intelligentsia. Unlike the intellectuals, who had been marginalised or

suppressed because the peasantry was catapulted into power and into the bureaucracy, a class was created which became dependent on the state for its survival. The traditions of dependency, conformity and authoritarianism, combined with the conformist and loyal Orthodox Church, ensured the omnipotence of the state.

These traditions help to explain recent developments in Romania and Bulgaria. Because opposition groups had no constituency, they were unable to organise political parties on any grand scale during the elections which were held last May in Romania and June in Bulgaria.

The traditions of conformity, particularly among the bureaucracy, intelligentsia and peasantry, meant that they could make little headway. They campaigned on the platform of the market economy, foreign investment and land reform. The status quo skilfully warned that if the opposition won, they would sell Bulgaria or Romania out to Western capital.

That is why the Bulgarian Socialist Party and the Romanian National Salvation Front did so well. They promised the electorate that the state would provide. Alas, these governments must now eat humble words. They are each asking the European

Community and the Group of 24 industrialised countries to help them as central authority quickly breaks down. That breakdown is the reason for rationing, black-marketing and hoarding. The new governments, desperate to be accepted into the 'New Europe', have had no idea how to construct transitional structures for making the great leap from the state planning system to the market economy or the time to do it. A dangerous vacuum exists. The forced resignation of last November by Andrei Lukanov, the Bulgarian prime minister, confirmed the fragility of the system.

These countries have been encouraged by Western governments to introduce market economies on the understanding that they would receive aid; this has proved to be a false promise. Such assistance, even from the UK-based Know-How Fund, has so far failed to materialise. Romania and Bulgaria are groping in the dark. The longer the delay in providing advice and assistance, the greater the succour for neo-fascist and nationalist movements.

We have already seen how the *Vatra Romaneasca*, the far right-wing movement in Romania, unashamedly echoes the Ceausescu regime in its demands for a pure

Romania. We have seen how *Romania Mare*, a Bucharest weekly, which pours vitriol on the country's intellectuals and its ethnic communities, stokes the fires of the disenfranchised. Acknowledgement by Western governments that these countries are trying to create the institutions for political pluralism might give the fledgling oppositions a chance to regroup.

The countries of 'central Europe' have also failed to lend solidarity. True, these new fragile democracies have their own problems. But Hungary's right-wing Democratic Forum government continues to criticise the

'A dangerous vacuum exists... The longer the delay in providing advice and assistance, the greater the succour for neo-fascist and nationalist movements'

Romanian government on almost every single issue. Poland, for its part, will now charge Romanians the equivalent of \$20 a day to visit Poland; Austria has reimposed visas for Bulgarians, Romanians and Poles. Such developments are leading to the creation of new divisions in Europe. The 'former' eastern Europe is being divided between central Europe and the Balkans; between reformers and communists; between liberals and authoritarians.

Western and 'central European' governments should shoulder the responsibility for cementing or preventing these divisions. Having waved the carrot of the market economy in front of Bulgaria's and Romania's governments, they should at least show them the way. That means allowing their citizens to travel, and granting scholarships and work permits, so that they can see how other systems function.

It is no irony that the countries with the highest and most unrealistic expectations are those which were prevented from travelling under the communist regimes. Illusions must be shattered. Otherwise the idealism of populism will prosper.●



Illustration: Michael Sheehy

Andrew Clements looks for the authentic Mozart

The Mozart Mood



Brush and ink image of the genius at work

There is still almost a year to go before the exact anniversary of the death of Mozart – on December 5, 1791 – yet the bicentenary celebrations already seem to be in full swing. The autumn's record schedules were dominated by the release of complete Mozart editions, subscription series, opera trilogies and the promise of even more to come, while in concert halls and opera houses across Europe the shape of the new year's programming seems all too easy to predict.

In London, the Barbican looks set to be the first out of the starting stalls with its ambitious 'Mozart 200': a celebration in two parts running from January to March and again from September to December. It is a series of 21 concerts pres-

enting the major works of Mozart's maturity in chronological order.

What starts on January 25 with a concert performance of *Mitridate*, *Re Di Ponto*, the opera seria after Racine that Mozart wrote in 1770 at the age of 14, will end on the exact deathday, December 5, with the most exquisite products of his final year, the Clarinet Concerto and Requiem.

It is as good an approach as any to getting to grips with the product of that creative genius, and trying to bring some sense and shape to the perception of a composer who is now more popular and more revered than he has ever been.

Suddenly Mozart has become common cultural property in a quite unprecedented way. The explosion

of interest in the last two decades is the product of an unlikely combination of commercial exploitation, popular myth-making and academic endeavour. The steady expansion of the recording industry over the last 30 years has fuelled its own demand for the ready availability of every note from every one of the great composers.

In Mozart's case it has offered domestic access to a whole body of music in every genre that was previously neglected, so that every facet of his creative genius has steadily become illuminated. And with the desire for more music has come the desire for more biographical immediacy.

Sober academic research has progressively managed to dispel most of the myths sur-

rounding Mozart's life and death. The exact nature of his final illness may remain somewhat uncertain but the persistent suggestion that he was murdered has been firmly squashed, and the connected tales of his sexual liaisons seem equally fanciful.

Yet there is no doubt that the enormous stage-and-screen success of Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus* has played a big part in creating a popular awareness of what an exceptional creature Mozart was, and the extent of his achievement. Its portrait of a philandering, drink-sodden yet magically gifted lout saddled with an inanely stupid wife, the persistent target of insanely jealous attacks from his contemporary Salieri, amounts to little more than a wild caricature.

But the caricature brought the man alive in a way that a more fastidious biographer could never contemplate. Although it may be a long time before the *Amadeus* persona fades, and can be replaced by a more faithful image, however, the music has largely survived such distortions and prospered enormously.

It is easy to forget that for the first 100 years after his death, knowledge of Mozart was strictly circumscribed. The early-19th century had prized *The Magic Flute* and *Don Giovanni*, a handful of the symphonies and piano concertos, but generally considered his music too complicated and arcane for widespread consumption.

The romantic age valued most highly the soft, pliant side of Mozart, the Apollonian purity and elegance. The comprehensive appreciation of his operatic genius for what it was, for its piercing psychological insights and fusion of musical and dramatic structures, is very much a modern one.

The celebrations for the bicentenary of Mozart's birth in 1956 gave its own boost to the burgeoning performances and academic studies that had grown in depth and breadth throughout the century. *Così fan Tutte*, which had earned the moral disapproval of no less than Beethoven and Wagner, and *Ido-*

meneo only became regular repertory pieces in the 1950s. The other *opera seria*, including *La Clemenza Di Tito*, had to wait another 20 years for acceptance.

By then a radical reappraisal of what constituted Mozartian, and indeed Classical style as a whole, was already underway. 'Authenticity' had begun as a performing phenomenon in baroque music. It rapidly annexed the whole of the 18th century, and at present is making great inroads into the heart of the orchestral literature of the 19th. But its impact on what is acceptable as an appropriate sound world has arguably had a more profound influence on our current perceptions of Mozart than on those of any other popular composer.

Hearing, say, the 40th Symphony played by a standard (that is late 19th-century) symphony orchestra with a large, succulent body of strings, boosted, superbright woodwind and swathes of romantic expressiveness now seems as much a lurid caricature as anything in Shaffer's *Amadeus* script.

There remain some formidable opponents to the cult of period performance. Some of them suggest that the desire to reinvent the music of the past is simply a reaction to the inadequacy of the music of the present. It is hard to deny that the infinitely flexible 'authentic' Mozart sound, with gut strings perfectly matched to period woodwind and brass, capable of the most subtle inflections, seems to offer much more than another cosmetic gloss on familiar music.

It's a shame that the concerts in the Barbican Mozart fest seem likely to be relatively unaffected by 'authentic' views of Mozart. They promise performances of a thoroughly earnest elegant kind that has been common currency for the last quarter century. But our current appreciation of Mozart has been indelibly coloured by these new-old textures. Any credible celebration of his genius ought to have recognised that and included it as prerequisite of its planning. ●



Cue Mozart Popular Music

Overture to *Il Re Pastore*, Violin Concerto No.4 in D, Arias for Ramiro from *La Finta Giardiniera*, Aminta's aria from *Il Re Pastore*, and Violin Concerto No.5 in A. Violin, Nigel Kennedy. Soprano, Amanda Roocroft. Mozart's five violin concertos given the Burton's treatment by 'serious' music's ambassador to the masses. How many of Nigel's Radio One fans will turn up for their dose of transcendental culture? (February 27).

Mozart In Art 1900-1990

Artists inspired by Mozart. Emotive canvases featuring Max Slevogt, Paul Klee, Hannah Hoch and David Hockney. Also features Tomas Rother's *Sound Object Amadeus*, an interactive sculpture produced by blending a Canova tomb, a wigwam, and

a metronome. Exhibition-goers can 'play' the object in a variety of different ways to their hearts' content. (February 14 - April 1). Admission free.

Mozart's Billiards

Not a Radio Three double entendre, but an exhibition to celebrate Mozart's fame as the number one billiard player in Europe. The variety of billiards played in Mozart's time was called carom, a much faster and pocketless version of the game played in smoky Westminster clubs in the 1990s. For aspiring Mozart imitators tuition will be available from star players and a computer will be on hand to recommend all the best shots. (January 25, 26, 27).

Mozart in Film

Whom The Gods Love (Directed by Basil Dean, 1936) Filmed in Vienna and Salz-

burg with no romantic device left unused. Soundtrack by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor Sir Thomas Beecham. (January 27). *The Life Of Mozart* (Directed by Hans Conrad Fisher, 1967). Imaginatively titled expansive drama documentary encompassing everything decent that we could possibly want to know about Mozart's life all packed into 148 minutes. Seamless soundtrack by the Berlin Philharmonic and the Vienna Symphony. (February 10). *Amadeus* (Milos Forman, 1984). Easily the most famous of the Mozart films, Forman's interpretation is unashamedly extravagant and exhilarating. If Nigel Kennedy had performed the soundtrack they might have had a real blockbuster on their hands. (February 17). ●

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The politics of hate

Political Poison

'Because there's one thing I know, I'd live long enough to savour/That's when they finally put you in the ground/I'll stand on your grave and tramp the dirt down'

This is one of our most respected songwriter's view of Margaret Thatcher. It's from Elvis Costello's 1989 album *Spike*. Morrissey wanted to see Margaret on the guillotine. 'When will you die? When will you die?' he wailed plaintively in an acute piece of political analysis. Hanif Kureishi's reaction on Thatcher's resignation was: 'I just feel sorry she didn't suffer longer at the end.'

Howard Brenton in *The Guardian* wrote of the Thatcher decade: 'It may seem exaggerated but it was as if some kind of evil was abroad in our society.' At the battle of Trafalgar, the chant went up among anti-poll tax demonstrators 'Ceausescu's gone, Thatcher's next'. The woman was clearly inspirational. It takes more than a few unpopular policies to bring out this level of vitriol. And now she is gone, who will we hate?

Can you imagine anyone working themselves up like this over John Major? The man with no upper lip, who, as someone pointed out, ran away from the circus to join a firm of accountants, who is described even by fellow Tory MP Julian Critchley as having 'all the excitement of a provincial bank manager'.

Will right-on pop stars be baying for the blood of Mr Major? Will he be compared to Hitler or even Winston Churchill? Will he present himself as the Tin Man in contrast to the Iron Lady? I hardly think so. For after a decade of personality politics – Thatcher here and Reagan in the States – we have ended up with a prime minister who appears to have had his personality surgically removed. Kinnock too has been so busy of late repressing any traces of individuality that he is now rivaling the Tories in the bland-leading-the-bland stakes.

But whether you like it or not, the politics of hate has been important for the Left in the Thatcher era. For a long time it has been enough

to hate what she stood for, to hate what was happening to Britain, but above all to hate *her*. And I can't help feeling that the depths of hatred, and conversely loyalty, that Thatcher inspired, were tied to the fact that she is a woman.

After 11½ years, we should have come to terms with the centrality of gender to her reign; but reading her political obituaries it seems in many ways we are just as much in the dark as ever. She was a woman, but she did nothing for women. She destroyed once and for all the idea that being a woman necessarily meant you were softer, more caring, more sympathetic than a man. Yet she didn't disturb gender relations enough to ensure there would be more women in the cabinet or even in parliament.

And less than two weeks after she had gone the veil was being lifted. Teresa Gorman will squat the front benches, Edwina Currie has murmured her discontent, 'the woman problem' is being debated publicly in the most right-wing papers. It is as if the figure of Thatcher herself blocked any discussion of gender. Now finally it is being talked about.

The 'Thatcher factor' was thought, like the woman herself, to be somehow above gender. More manly than any man, and yet a housewife who liked baking cakes as much as international politics. While we on the left talked endlessly about the fluidity of subjectivity, sexuality and identity, here was a woman who slid effortlessly from one identity to another. A woman who instinctively knew that femininity was a masquerade and that contradiction was not a flaw but a fact of life.

But culturally and politically there has been a failure to deal with that. Anti-Thatcher imagery has always been at base crude, even in its most sophisticated guise. *Spitting Image* took away the handbag, the ultimate and for some disturbing symbol of mysterious femininity (What do they keep in there?). It was replaced with the obvious signifier of masculin-

ity, the big cigar. Thatcher was (surprise, surprise) really a man, right down to wearing a shirt and tie. The woman with power can only ever be seen in terms of masculinity – the phallic woman – never on her own terms. But her great strength, surely, was that she changed those terms.

Alternatively, Maggie was arch-dominatrix or nanny, the nation and her colleagues finding their thrills in some strange sado-masochistic relationship that exploited the innate British desire for punishment. Trying to get to the bottom of this in a ludicrously literal application of Freud, Leo Abse attempted a psychobiography of the woman.

She had, he told us, despised her mother, glorified her father, had a peculiar time on the potty and a bad time on the breast. That's why one of her first public acts was withdrawing free school milk, gedit? Germaine Greer gave us an analysis of the Thatcher bosom. Was its appeal asexually matronly or invitingly motherly? Meanwhile, Mitterrand drooled at the woman 'with the eyes of Caligula and the mouth of Marilyn Monroe', while a couple of drunken Tory MPs had the audacity to make passes at her.

Yet the Left has always denied her sex appeal. Its stock reaction has always been that she is not a 'real woman'. However you view her, Maggie was enough of a woman for misogyny disguised as political analysis to rule the day. Remember Labour's cries of 'ditch the bitch'. Sure enough, I hate her too. Always will. But now we have to face up to the business of dealing with Thatcherism without Thatcher, maybe we have to realise that it wasn't all Her.

There is something pure about the politics of hate. It doesn't even feel like politics any more, just good old-fashioned morality. I think she understood that. But without her as the target I wonder what is to become of all that venom, all that hatred, all that righteous anger? After all, it's far too good to waste. ●

Dramatic Realism

From Janet Daley, a columnist for *The Independent*

David Edgar (*MT* December) presents a picture of the subsidised theatre as 'the very best kind of socialist enterprise', both in a symbolic sense, in that it constitutes a non-materialistic collective undertaking, and, in a more pragmatic one, by virtue of its deliberate anti-racism and anti-sexism. As metaphors go, it is tenable, if highly selective. It would be rather difficult to sustain his view that an audience gathering together ('on the basis of collectively agreed rules') in pursuit of communal enlightenment, is an inherently socialist notion. It is much more arguably a religious one. Or, to take an even longer historical perspective,

a mythic one. Socialists are notorious for appropriating the most elemental needs and desires of the human condition as their own intellectual property.

Does he have any idea how much damage has been done to the cause of public subsidy of the theatre by those who wish to utilise artistic experience for political ends? Those of us who attempt to defend public support for the performing arts, on the grounds that the personal liberation of artistic enlightenment should be made available to as wide an audience as possible, are constantly undermined by the axe-grinders of the left who see subsidised theatre as an arm of social engineering and a job creation scheme.

Of course art is inevitably political. In the most important sense, it is subversive of any conceivable authoritarian orthodoxy because it is, left to itself, immutably individualistic. It offers, to those who are permitted to experience it, the priceless resource of an internal life and personal criteria by which to judge whatever is offered to them by way of dogma. As the ultimate guarantor of intellectual freedom, art offers to its audience the wherewithal to resist ideological oppression of whatever stamp. Given the resources, people may make up their own minds about your politics and mine. But then, perhaps, insulting people against authoritarianism is not what socialists have in mind.●

Abuse Of Faith

Bea Campbell's article on ritual child abuse (*MT* November) presents only one side of the story. She says nothing about the 18 foster parents who did not report any signs of ritual abuse from the children in their care, or the intensive forensic investigation that did not turn up a single trace of human or animal sacrifice.

Campbell talks about the inquiry's 'need to believe' that there is no sub-culture of satanic abuse in Britain. I would like to know why Campbell needs to believe in something for which there is about as much physical evidence as there is for flying saucers.

Over the last two and a half years, the ritual abuse myth has been rising in Britain, and there is no doubt whatsoever that it emanates from the US Christian right via international fundamentalist information networks. In America, the ritual abuse allegations focussed on day-care centres, but so far no physical evidence has been produced to show that satanic abuse rings have been making use of these centres – all the evidence has consisted of the 'disclosures' of very young children who had been through months of therapy with people who firmly believed in ritual abuse.

It has taken this time for the idea of satanic abuse to become established in Britain. It generally takes about that long for American cultural ideas to penetrate to Europe. Had ritual abuse rings been operating in Britain before 1987-8, details and hints of it would have been circulating for years beforehand.

Instead, the current British scare has all the appearance of a transplanted myth, with the confirming 'proofs' appearing only after the details had been made part of public knowledge through tabloid reporting.

'Believe the children' is Campbell's entirely understandable gut reaction to satanic abuse. But gut reaction simply cannot be trusted! I wish that she showed some of the honesty and insight of Simone Weil, who wrote: 'I know that if at this moment I had before me a group of 20 young Germans singing Nazi songs, a part of me would instantly become Nazi. This is a very great weakness...'. Justice is not served by wild emotionalism – just ask the Guildford Four.●

Val Dobson, Lancashire

From Ian Brown, Artistic Director of the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh

I agree with much that David Edgar says (*MT* December) about British theatre. However, from the perspective of a small theatre in Scotland dedicated to the premiering of 10 new plays a year, the future looks both exciting and terrifying; the Conservatives' arts policy is mean and grudging, certainly, but it has created an energy and a desire not to have all our funding from one basket.

Still, the inescapable fact re-

mains that public investment in the arts is not only crucial, but sensible – because the exchequer gets back more than it puts in, through taxation and VAT. In addition, we beleaguered small theatres pump prime the big guns further up the line, most of whom do nothing to support us in turn; we provide television, film and cable with a huge percentage of the writers, actors, plays, designers and technicians they need, while the public consumes the goods without a thought for where they all

come from. Without this pool of talent the standard of broadcasting would be much lower.

The arts in Britain more than earn their keep, but we haven't won this argument by any means. The main worry for me is the boards and institutions who are running scared, providing the public with pap – second-hand musicals and safe product. They are the ones killing vitality and progress. Keep the bums on seats by all means, but make sure that the product is worth the sitting through.●

From Richard Morrison, arts editor of *The Times*

David Edgar (*MT* December) has concocted a melodramatic description of the current state of British theatre. Parsimonious state funding has put it in 'crisis', 'infected' by the need to attract business sponsorship, yet still battling – against all the odds of a corrupting capitalist society – to produce 'the very best kind of socialist enterprise', one that will 'democratise working practices and widen the audience'.

I agree with him that the government could fund our theatres more generously. But then, I am middle-class and university-educated, as are most of Mr Edgar's audiences. He is deceiving himself if he thinks otherwise. Because he writes plays of subtlety and sophistication, he will always tend to appeal to that audience. So, in effect, he is asking for more subsidy not to broaden ordinary people's access to the theatre, but to make the tickets cheaper for those affluent

enough to afford them anyway. Meanwhile, the vast majority of the population, if they go to the theatre at all, prefer the entirely unsubsidised and apolitical musicals of Lloyd Webber or the comedies of Alan Ayckbourn.

Trying to change the world from the stage is always fraught with uncertainty. Caryl Churchill's play *Serious Money* was intended as a devastating satire on City immorality, and indeed it was. But who packed the theatre night after night? The Porsche-owning yuppies who were being so mercilessly mocked. They loved the show. Again, Mr Edgar is suffering from delusions of grandeur if he thinks that 'the people who run this country at the moment dislike the theatre so much'.

The truth is that not for some years has a British dramatist produced a play to shake the Establishment, even momentarily. Indeed, one characteristic of the last decade has been not the fierceness of the theatrical onslaught on That-

cherism, but the supine sense of helplessness and confusion emanating from the theatres.

What have upset the Establishment, however, are ITV drama-documentaries, such as *Death On The Rock*, that directly challenged specific government interpretations. It must be disconcerting (from Edgar's point of view) to note that, as these were produced by the commercial network, they were actually financed by 'big business'. Sponsorship need not 'infect' an artist's ability to challenge preconceptions.

Only in the unreal atmosphere of theatreland would it be possible to sustain Edgar's argument that the more state subsidy given to performers, the better it is for artistic freedom. The opposite is surely closer to the truth. Mr Edgar could argue that the theatre is an important mouthpiece of opposition to government policies, or he can argue for much bigger government subsidies. But he cannot plausibly do both at the same time.●

Parting Thought

It seems to me paradoxical, from my perspective in France, that as both the British and the French communist parties celebrate their 70th anniversaries, the British party seems to be making plans for its retirement while the French party is still vigorously campaigning for democratic socialism and setting an agenda based on the challenges of the 90s.

It has never been more important for the voice of the left to be put forward. Old and new fissures are being opened up by the integration of Europe; social conflict is on the increase, evidenced by an upsurge in racism. However, the collapse of the eastern European communist states and their rush towards 'casino' capitalism seems to have traumatised the British party.

There is also the prickly question of the environment, which without doubt represents the biggest challenge to capitalism since the 1960s, but is desperately short of a response based on the ideology of the left. All these issues mark areas that will dominate the last decade of this century, and the British Communist Party can and should make important contributions upon every one.

History is full of lessons on the dangers that a void on the left can cause. Now is exactly the wrong time to be contemplating the departure of the Party.

An optimist believes this is the best of all worlds; a pessimist knows it is. The Communist Party cannot be a pessimist, even if individuals are. I hope the Party will decide to keep its name, remain a party and enter the political field with renewed vigour. ●

Andrew Ellis, Paris

Moore Cynical

I enjoy Suzanne Moore's column and am in awe of her ability to come up with a seemingly endless series of vehicles for the same old message of hopelessness.

Her basic trick when she writes about men is to suggest that the anti-sexist ideas and practice of some men are invalidated by the conservative sexism of others. It must be a sign of the times that in a magazine which borrows its title from the founder of dialectical materialism, the existence of a

contradiction is employed to bludgeon the progressive with the reactionary.

Moore is determined to mould the changing world to her static and cynical view of it. At least she has the honesty to admit that in dismissing the struggles of men and women to find new forms of parenting, for example, as 'cosy', she is being 'bitter and twisted'. ●

Brendan Martin, London

Roots

Marxism Today has for some years been exploring a political terrain well beyond 'marxism'. 'Radical', which the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines as 'going to the root', has a suitably green ring to it. Why not call yourselves *The Radical*?

As for the Party, Bea Campbell is quite right. The party's over. Enjoy it, and give whatever is left to a renamed magazine and its supporting activities and networks. ●

Simon Partridge, London

Pressure Points

In Fred Steward's article (*MT* December) there was not one mention of the Green Party. Either this was a gross oversight, or he recognises, as I do, that as soon as pressure groups attempt to become 'real' political parties, they only succeed in paralysing the principle on which they were founded. You have only to look at the SNP and their dogmatic support for an independent Scotland to see that a party based on what is essentially a fringe issue does harm to its cause.

This tallies with the tame environmental reports from all

three 'main' parties: surely more severe measures would have been outlined if this would not have been tantamount to endorsing another, albeit minor party, the Greens?

Until the unwritten parliamentary rule forbidding MPs to champion another party's policy is broken, it will be much more beneficial for the Greens and their ilk to remain as pressure groups rather than to be seen as political competition. ●

Ross McMillan, Glasgow

Ego Tripping

Barry Richards' reply to Martin Pawley's article on the car (*MT* September and October) fails to address the latter's main contention, that 'personal mobility is a priceless freedom' we have to preserve. Freedom for whom? For me queueing for a crowded bus that then gets stuck in a traffic jam? For the woman with a baby buggy festooned with bulging carrier bags?

Richards euphorically calls the car 'the vehicle of dreams'. So was nazism. Isn't it time to wake up and grow up? When the steam engine was invented, our forefathers realised that its benefits had to be devoted to public purposes. We should demand no less of the internal combustion engine. Really adequate and comfortable bus services, with perhaps a subsidised taxi and car hire service for special purposes and needs, should become the civilised norm.

The 'I'm alright Jack' syndrome used to be considered a working-class phenomenon. For today's middle-class centre-lefties, 'freedom' is fast becoming an appealing euphemism for egotism. ●

Dorothy Friedmann, London

Phoning In

Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques' article on post-Thatcherism (*MT* December) suggests that any new radical project for the 90s must appeal to, amongst others, 'the highly skilled, highly educated salariat... in leading-edge, hi-tech industry'.

Sounds to me just like the members of my trade-union branch, some of whom remain committed Tory supporters. When Mrs Thatcher resigned, my phone did not stop ringing with relieved members anxious to tell me the news. They have seen the demoralising chaos which Thatcherism's radicalism has brought. To most, a period of do-nothing Kinnockism would be most welcome, I suspect.

The forces which led to Thatcherism were around before Thatcher, and despite the verdicts of the media pundits, will continue to have an impact long after she's gone. But the survival of my union branch is a potent symbol that Thatcher's mission failed. ●

Keith Flett, Society of Telecom Executives, London

Taking The Mick

Michael Ignatieff (*MT* December) probably doesn't read *Marxism Today*, but it would be interesting to have him explain how movements would form governments. ●

Amanda Norrie, London

Christmas Draw:

In the *Marxism Today* totally free Christmas Draw, J Mark Prescott wins the Factory Records hamper; M Caulfield wins the Brixton Cycles voucher; and Ruth Middleton wins the ANC watch and diary. ●

Apology:

In Ralf Dahrendorf's article last month, there was a sentence on p.16 that read, 'Full monetary union of the present 12 members of the European Community by the year 2000 is... highly probable'. It is more than probable that the final word should have been 'improbable'.

Editorial Note:

We welcome your letters to add to discussion. Please send them to *MT* Letters, 6-9 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF. Brevity means you are more likely to be published. We reserve the right to cut. ●



Best Of Newman (Corgi £2.95), is a selection of our cartoonist Nick Newman's work from the last 10 years.



After Thatcher

Following The Leader

An extraordinary era is finally over.
Andrew Gamble looks back on the Thatcher
years and assesses prospects for life
under Major

On the end Thatcher's fall was as spectacular as her rise. She destroyed herself, and in so doing she almost destroyed her party too. Four more votes on the first ballot would have been enough for her. She would have claimed the result as both victory and vindication. There would have been no need to compromise with her enemies. Despite winning the support of more than a third of the parliamentary party Michael Heseltine would not have been invited back into the government. Thatcher would have insisted on her right to lead the party into the next election despite the depths of its divisions over her leadership.

Once she was gone, the sense of relief in the parliamentary party was overwhelming. The old Conservative instinct for unity reasserted itself. So effortlessly has this been accomplished that it makes the death throes of Thatcher's leadership all the more remarkable. Only by the narrowest of margins was the Conservative Party saved from a deep split that might have become permanent and would almost certainly have destroyed Conservative chances of electoral recovery before the next general election.

Thatcher's fall is the end of an era in British politics as turbulent and eventful as any in the 20th century. Quieter times lie ahead. As Thatcher's preferred successor, John Major represents continuity. But he also represents the routinisation of charisma, and the dissipation of the energy, the radicalism, and the conviction that suffused the Thatcher decade. Thatcher's resignation is more than just the end of one political leader. It signals the end of a regime. Thatcher was not only a dominating political personality like Churchill, but also the focus of a distinctive political project. It is the future of this project that is now in doubt.

Thatcher liked to compare herself with Churchill, but a better comparison is De Gaulle. Churchill bequeathed no distinctive vision or policy agenda to his successors. His prestige stemmed from his role as a war leader. Britain's postwar political agenda, and the response of the Conservative Party, were shaped by others. De Gaulle, however, was not only France's war leader, but also the founder of the Fifth Republic and the focus of Gaullism, the political movement which dominated French politics through the 1960s. After his departure, Gaullism both as a political movement and as a political project gradually disintegrated.

Will Thatcherism also now disintegrate? The radicalism associated with the Thatcher era stemmed from three main sources; Thatcher's style of leadership; the ideology of the new Right; and the policy decisions of the Thatcher government in response to changing economic and political circumstances. With Thatcher gone, many Thatcherites suspect that the influence of new Right ideology will wane, and that the Con-

servatives will revert to political pragmatism and electoral opportunism in dealing with the new issues that are coming to dominate the 1990s. They fear that Thatcherism will not long outlast Thatcher.

As a political project, Thatcherism was fashioned by many individuals, groups and interests. It was always much more than simply an extension of her beliefs and political style. Her departure does not mean that Thatcherism comes to an abrupt halt, any more than De Gaulle's departure in 1969 brought the immediate eclipse of Gaullism. The Right held on to power in France until 1981.

Thatcherism, however, has always been less dominant in Britain than Gaullism was in France. Thatcher was a dynamic and dominant force in British politics. Yet her dominance masked weakness. She was always a minority leader – in the parliamentary party, in her cabinet, and in the country. Only perhaps in the grass roots of the Conservative Party did she gain unquestioning allegiance. A mixture of strength, cunning, and luck enabled her to survive as long as she did. Her leadership was often under threat and she might have been overthrown several times before 1990 – in 1981 following the slump and the inner city riots, in 1982 after the Falklands war if the military action had failed, and in 1986 following the Westland affair.

She seized the leadership of the Conservative Party in a coup, and held it so long as she delivered the party parliamentary majorities. But the electoral base remained slender. The Conservative Party under her leadership never won more than 43% of the vote. The Thatcherite wing of the parliamentary party never became a majority. The electorate remained stubbornly hostile to key elements of the radical programme of the Thatcher government, particularly in its later stages. Substantial majorities opposed the government's reforms on health, education, poll tax, and even privatisation.

Thatcher saw herself as a lonely conviction politician fighting against an array of enemies entrenched throughout British society. Postwar Conservatism had appeased collectivism and acquiesced in the steady expansion of both the scope and the size of the state. To fight this trend Thatcher and her supporters were from the beginning openly ideological. She polarised her party and the country, challenging everyone to define where they stood. She inspired devotion as well as intense dislike and hostility. The fall of Britain's 'greatest peacetime prime minister' was experienced by two-thirds of the electorate like the fall of Ceaucescu, and by one third like the assassination of Kennedy. Whatever John Major is like, he is not going to be like this.

Under Major, ideology can be expected to play a much smaller part in the Conservative Party. The Conserva-

tives never used to be an ideological party. They had major divisions, but always over specific issues like Tariff Reform, Indian independence, or Rhodesian sanctions. They remained remarkably free from organised factions, so that the conventional labels of Left and Right found little application. The party was distinguished by its appetite for power and its loyalty to its leaders. It was always a party of government and was renowned for its readiness to accommodate new interests and to modify its principles in pursuit of power.

Thatcher changed all that. She captured the leadership as an outsider and unlike any previous Conservative leader this century, she set out to found Conservative policy on a firm set of principles. She herself was never an ideologue, in the manner of Enoch Powell or Keith Joseph. But what her leadership provided was the opportunity for the ideas of the new Right to influence Conservative policies and strategy. They provided a flow of ideas which enabled Thatcher and Joseph to assert and defend a distinctive ideological and policy position against the scepticism of the bulk of the shadow cabinet. Thatcher became convinced that her political mission was to reverse the political trends towards collectivism and corporatism which Conservative governments had accepted and even assisted throughout the 20th century. She wanted to roll back the frontiers of the state and restore free markets, personal responsibility, and political authority. Her political skill was to combine the traditional Conservative emphasis on the need to uphold the authority of the state, with the new Right emphasis on the need to free the economy from obstacles to competitive markets.

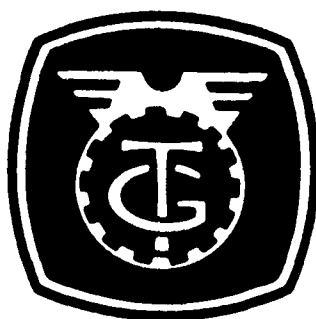
The activities of the new Right in the party after 1975 sharpened ideological divisions, and gave rise to Thatcher's famous question: 'Is he one of us?' To be one of us in the Thatcher era, it was not enough to be a Conservative. It was necessary to believe in the Thatcher project and the broad political principles which underpinned it. In this way, Thatcher gathered to herself a devoted army spread through the party, the media, the universities, and the business community.

This army of supporters, however, although large, was never large enough. It may not now be large enough to continue the Thatcherite revolution. The think-tanks will remain, and will continue to supply detailed policy advice. But the market for ideas in government will not be tilted so much in their favour. Although the Thatcherite agenda is far from exhausted, the tides of political fashion are swinging against it. The Thatcherites fought desperately to keep Margaret Thatcher. Many could not reconcile themselves to the prospect of a different leader, no longer committed to the pursuit of Thatcher's vision. They were Thatcherites first and Conservatives second.

John Major offers a sharp contrast to

'Thatcher liked to compare herself with Churchill, but a better comparison is De Gaulle'





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After the Fall

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Thatcher, because he lacks her fierce ideological conviction and certainty. Commentators have been hard-pressed to discover what he believes in at all. He has enjoyed an effortless rise in only 11 years from backbencher to prime minister, and has only limited departmental experience. He has never sat on the opposition benches, and during his time in parliament has never known any prime minister other than Margaret Thatcher. His main attributes are that he is competent, efficient, and has no enemies.

His acceptability to the Thatcherite wing of the party, the bulk of which voted for him once Thatcher withdrew, is puzzling. He was chief secretary in the Treasury when Lawson was pursuing the policies the Thatcherites now blame for the resurgence of inflation. He had three uncomfortable months in 1989 as foreign secretary when he appeared out of his depth. He returned to the Treasury in October 1989 as chancellor where his chief contribution was to ally with Douglas Hurd and persuade the prime minister to put sterling into the Exchange Rate Mechanism. He also devised a proposal for a common currency – the hard ecu – which to sceptics in his party looked like a dangerous step towards acceptance of the principle of a single European currency.

If Major's reputation as a Thatcherite on economic and European issues is a little shaky, on social issues he hardly seems a Thatcherite at all. He is opposed to capital punishment and describes himself as a social liberal. As a councillor in Brixton he was noted for helping to drive out racists from the local Conservative Party and for public sector house building programmes. After 1979 he became a member of the Blue Chip group, an anti-Thatcherite dining group which included Chris Patten and William Waldegrave. During his brief campaign for the leadership he signalled his desire for a major review of education to raise its priority and the status of teachers. If Major has an agenda of his own it is primarily a public interest agenda.

These clues, and they are little more than clues at the moment, hardly suggest that radical Thatcherism will be safe in John Major's hands. The Thatcherites seem to have voted for him more out of desperation than of hope. Of the three candidates, he represented the least obvious repudiation of the Thatcher legacy. Douglas Hurd was suspect for having been at Eton, university and the Foreign Office, as well as Edward Heath's personal assistant in 1970-74. Thatcher had kept him out of her governments for as long as she could.

Michael Heseltine represented a different problem for the Thatcherites. Although he had been one of Thatcher's more successful ministers and had helped implement Thatcherite policies through council house sales and through the deployment of cruise and

Pershing missiles, Heseltine was already unacceptable as a successor to most of the Thatcherite wing because he alone of her many critics had developed an alternative political project to hers, and was identified with support for public welfare and government intervention to improve competitive performance, and more rapid European integration. He became completely unacceptable when he became the instrument of Thatcher's fall.

His 'treachery', although much less damaging to Thatcher than the 'treachery' of Geoffrey Howe, Nigel Lawson or even Norman Lamont – her own people – made him the candidate the Thatcherites most wanted to stop. If Heseltine had won, it would have seemed as though the party was repudiating the Thatcher years. Thatcher accused him of wanting to pull down all she had achieved. By allowing himself to appear as the candidate approved by Thatcher, Major gained the support of those Conservative who wished to atone for their regicide. By electing Major, the party chose the candidate Thatcher herself could endorse.

There are many ironies here. The candidate most likely to preserve and extend the Thatcherite revolution was Heseltine. The break from the Thatcher years would have been sharpest at the beginning, both in terms of policies and personnel. But Heseltine was the candidate most prepared to search out radical solutions to public problems, and most determined to implement them. He was always the best hope for the new Right think-tanks. He might have been persuaded of the merits of vouchers in education, or road pricing, or incentives for private health insurance. He would have kept up the attack on vested interests in the civil service and the professions. No kinder, gentler Britain for him. During the leadership election he offered the No Turning Back Group an alternative slogan – No Holding Back.

Major is not a radical in the Heseltine mould. He may not turn back but he is almost certain to hold back, particularly from radical experiments. His first cabinet appointments reveal the likely character of his government. The watchwords now are consensus, consolidation and co-operation. Following the resignation of leading Thatcherites in the last three years – Tebbit, Young, Lawson, Ridley, Howe and now Parkinson – there is no longer a clearly identifiable Thatcherite wing in this all-male cabinet. There have been no significant preferments for the younger group of Thatcherites from the No Turning Back Group. The direction of the government will be set by the Treasury team, Lamont and Mellor, Major's campaign managers, and by a powerful group of ministers in the big spending departments – Heseltine, Waldegrave, Clarke and Rifkind, supported by three other influential ministers – Hurd, Baker and Patten. None of these ministers are ideologically committed to

Thatcherite principles. All of them will become advocates of the new public interest agenda which Major has signalled.

The new government faces both immediate short-term tasks and longer-term strategic choices. It must first act quickly to repair the collapse of Conservative support under Thatcher in the last two years. This collapse had three main causes – the intense unpopularity of the poll tax, the repeated evidence of cabinet and party division over Europe, and the faltering performance of the economy. Major's cabinet will need to do something about all three if it is to maintain its initial popularity and win the next election. But at the same time it must look beyond the immediate issues to the pattern of politics in the 1990s.

The poll tax, as even Margaret Thatcher involuntarily called it in her last appearance at prime minister's question time, has turned into one of the biggest mistakes any government has ever committed. Thatcher's record-breaking unpopularity in the last phase of her premiership owed much to her close identification with this tax. Once they were free to speak, both Hurd and Major followed Heseltine's leads in promising a major review of it. Nigel Lawson revealed that he had argued against the tax in cabinet and that the Treasury had drawn up an alternative, very similar to earlier proposals made by Labour.

A top priority for the Major government is to promise a substantial change to the tax even if it cannot implement it before the next general election. Putting a leading critic of the tax like Heseltine in charge of the review is designed to defuse the poll tax as a major election issue. If the cabinet fails to endorse a radical reshaping of the tax, perhaps even its abolition, the government will be in trouble. But Major seems to understand this. And his cabinet is unlikely to obstruct reform.

Europe is a more difficult issue. Few in the Conservative Party will weep for the poll tax, since even under Thatcher the basic principle of the tax has been fatally compromised by the need to make it less of a vote loser. Divisions on Britain's relationship with Europe, however, remain deep. The agenda here is being set by the European Commission and by the other heads of government. In responding to the plans for speedy progress towards economic and monetary union, Major must tread carefully. He will seek to avoid the isolation which Britain experienced as a result of Thatcher's tactics of confrontation. But he risks a strong backlash within his own party if he appears to be committing Britain to a process of monetary integration through the creation of a single currency and an independent central bank.

He is likely to attempt to develop a policy whose priority is to maintain party unity. He will therefore loudly proclaim his support for the goal of greater integration of the Community while seek-

'The Thatcherites seem to have voted for Major more out of desperation than of hope'



ing to block rapid progress towards economic and monetary union by forming alliances with other European countries. Major will attempt to rally the cabinet and the party round this step-by-step approach. He will try to narrow the scope for disagreement with the government's policy as much as possible by postponing for as long as he can firm commitments to European union. Major is no Euro-enthusiast, but he will not obstruct the pressures that are pushing Britain towards closer ties with Europe. These pressures come both from the business community and from the United States. Major's firm dismissal of Thatcher's idea of a referendum on a single currency indicates that the process of integration by stealth has been resumed.

The economy is the third issue that brought Thatcher's downfall. The boom of the 1980s and the exaggerated claims which accompanied it has ended in a trade deficit, higher inflation, and plunging output and investment. Major's problem is that he has been one of the main architects of the policy. He can hardly dodge responsibility if the confident prediction he has made about improvement in the economy next year fail to materialise. The electoral fortunes of all governments appear to be increasingly linked to the performance of the economy and the way in which that performance is perceived by voters. But national governments have less and less control over the forces that shape that performance. The most they can do is attempt to align the electoral cycle with the economic cycle. In Britain, the two are currently far apart and only a small chance exists for bringing them back into line before the next election.

In dealing with these immediate issues the Major government is likely to have much more success with Europe and the poll tax than with the economy. But it is likely to be the economy that decides whether Major's government resembles Alec Home's – a determined but brief effort to stave off electoral defeat – or whether Major can obtain his own popular mandate and win the right to shape politics and policy through the 1990s.

The strategy on which the Major government appears to have embarked is aimed at defusing those issues on which the Thatcher government became so unpopular and appeared so divided, while signalling its conversion to a new public interest agenda for the 1990s. During the 1980s British politics was dominated by the private interest agenda of Thatcherism. A public interest agenda for the 1990s would give a much higher priority to the improvement of public services in health, education, transport and the environment. The Major government will not abandon the private interest agenda – it will still cut taxes and promote wider share and property ownership when it can – but it will no longer seek to promote the

private interest agenda at the expense of the public.

Such a shift of direction, which will be ably expounded by the new party chairman, Chris Patten, will pose problems for Labour and the Liberal Democrats. A new public interest agenda for the 1990s to counter the ravages of Thatcherism has been the opposition's strongest ground. The Major government threatens to cut that ground away. The competition between the parties will come to focus to an even greater extent than previously on whether the government is perceived as competent in its handling of the economy. The opposition has no distinct alternative policy to put to the electorate. It offers a different team of managers, whose main attraction is that they are not the present team.

In this sense the Major government is likely to mean a return to consensus politics, but a consensus to fit the circumstances of the 1990s, not a return to the different policies and circumstances of the 1960s. Under Kinnock, Labour has accepted key aspects of the changes introduced during the 1980s. National protectionism is dead. Both parties accept the need to manage the British economy within the constraints imposed by economic interdependence and an open world economy.

Thatcher won several key battles over the economy. But she lost battles over the welfare state and European integration. Major will bid to sustain Conservative rule through the 1990s by preserving parts of the Thatcher inheritance, but abandoning others. He will quietly shelve the Thatcherite crusades against the public sector, against Europe, and against communism. He already speaks of the welfare state as part of the instinct of the British people. Thatcher thought of it as the Road to Serfdom. New spending commitments seem likely to be made in education, health, transport, and the environment.

This strategy may be the best hope for the perpetuation of Thatcherism after Thatcher.

The policy changes of the Thatcher years, particularly privatisation and trade-union reform, will be consolidated. But further radical experiments will be discouraged. Major's programme implies extra resources for the public sector. The government has the opportunity to make deep cuts in defence spending following the end of the cold war. Other resources, however, can only come from economic growth or from higher taxes.

The Conservatives' objective is to persuade enough voters, particularly Conservative waverers, that the departure of Thatcher does signal a genuine new start, which removes most of the reasons for voting against the government. Two key problems remain however.

The first is the regional divide which has been so exacerbated during the Thatcher years. One sign of it is the precipitate decline of Unionism both in Scotland and in Northern Ireland, and

'Major is no Euro-enthusiast, but he will not obstruct the pressures that are pushing Britain towards closer ties with Europe'



the estrangement of large parts even of England from central rule from Westminster. Under Thatcher the Conservative came to rely more and more on their appeal to voters in the prosperous sectors of the South and East of the country and a divided opposition. Major will not change the peripheral status of other parts of the country simply by rhetoric about a classless society and rebuilding one nation. Things have gone too far for that. He may arrest for a time further decline of Conservative support in Scotland, but in order to reverse the trend away from the Tories he would have to concede effective devolution. Similarly, in Northern Ireland the policy lines seem set. Northern Ireland is already semi-detached and is drifting further away. The Westminster government will continue to seek the creation of the political conditions that would permit withdrawal.

A divided economy, a divided polity, and a divided society will be the context of Major's government in the 1990s. So too will be another of Thatcher's legacies – the structural weakness of the British economy. The burst of growth in the 1980s temporarily disguised further deterioration in the competitive strength of the British economy. The new government will attempt to run the economy so as to maximise its chances of winning the next election. But if it succeeds it will have to grapple with the consequences created by the contraction of the British manufacturing sector, and by the low priority given to investment in training, research, and infrastructure in the Thatcher years.

These problems of regional division and economic weakness are so deep-seated that a government seeking to consolidate and make itself electable is unlikely to propose any radical remedies to deal with them. Even if it succeeds in winning the next election – either a Gulf crisis or a world slump may yet throw out all calculations – the Conservatives may find themselves enmeshed in problems from the Thatcher era that they do not have the will or the capacity to tackle.

The response of the opposition parties will be closely watched. If the Conservative revival is sustained the case for electoral alliance will re-emerge. The opposition to Thatcherism is presently divided into Labour, Liberal Democrats, Greens, and Nationalists. They will all have to rethink their challenge, perhaps Labour most of all. Thatcher's demise may just be the trigger that Labour needs to escape from her mesmerising influence. What the opposition must find is a common programme that can address the problems of regional division and economic weakness and link them to policies for extending democracy and reforming the constitution. In so doing they might even rediscover their own radical traditions and break the Thatcherite spell.●

Andrew Gamble is author of The Free Economy And The Strong State.

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After Thatcher

A Class Of Her Own

Class, gender and accountability dominated the November coup in the Tory Party. **Beatrix Campbell** explains why

We now live in the era of post-Thatcherism. What does this mean? For sure it doesn't mean a return to pre-Thatcherism. Her nemesis does not mark the end of the cultural revolution, it simply signals a new season in the long life of our oldest party. Because, if nothing else, Margaret Thatcher has converted the Conservative Party into the radical party, the stupid party into the thinking party, the party of consensus into the party of argument. All of that was manifest in the moment of her demise – however unseemly was her eviction, however much the drama focused on the person rather than the politics, it was always apparent that this is a *serious* party, interested not only in power but also in taking power by taking the initiative.

Thatcher transformed it in every way from a defensive party to the offensive party. Certainly it had been stuck since 1987, without a project, without popular policies. It had become defensive. More than that, it became a party doomed to defend its leaders' fancies. But the Tories' modernisation as a political party created the conditions for a new cultural revolution. Ironically, the November coup was itself the lady's legacy. The arrival of 'accountability' in the Tory Party created at least the appearance that this was more than a palace coup; and Thatcher's earlier purge of the grandees restored the necessity of representivity to the political discourse – class and gender as much as policy defined the contenders and the criteria by which they would be judged.

As my friend reminded me when we ruminated on the coup, the process presented the Conservative Party as a democratic party. This did not mean that the leadership election itself was democratic – if anything it exposed the dominance of parliamentary-party cul-

ture in our political culture. The nation became bystanders in a coup designed to defer a general election. Nonetheless, the conduct of coup overshadowed any constitutional questions. Whether the result will secure a general election victory is another matter, what counts now is that the Conservatives converted a party crisis into a public crusade.

The irony is that the Conservative Party was appropriating the Bennite reforms of the Labour Party in the 1980s, reforms which were designed to discipline elected representatives and empower their electors, introduce the practices of accountability between MPs and party members, and offer a dialogue that would be consummated either in re-selection or de-selection.

Unlike the Conservative Party conference, Labour's conference had pretensions to policy-making. The inner-party crisis of the late-70s was not only about the leader, it was about the parliamentary party's abandonment of the activist party. Accountability was thus a response to betrayal and came to be perceived not as a democratic but a paranoid process in a party that was not so much democratised as preoccupied with policing itself.

In 1990, Tory MPs scuttling to their constituencies to consult them was, by contrast, presented as an apparently decorous dialogue, the kind of conversation-with-consequences that we hardly expected constituency parties to demand. Rank-and-file still believed that Thatcher was the best thing going for them, even if she continued to defy their complaints about almost everything. And so many Tory MPs found themselves at odds with their local parties and threatened with de-selection. It was an extraordinary scene. What matters in all this is that the rhetoric of party democracy has different meanings for Conservatives and

for Labour. The Tories aren't *really* democratic, but they are slowly being democratised. Moreover, it cannot be denied that the *rhetoric has its own reality* because here was a paradigm of what Stuart Hall calls the Conservatives' authoritarian-populism: an inner-party coup by the most powerful persons, conducted in the name of the nation.

Once Sir Geoffrey Howe's heroic critique of Thatcher triggered the leadership crisis, the issue of representivity came to dominate the debate. There was, of course, no question of a woman succeeding Margaret Thatcher. She herself had seen to that. But class identities and interests determined success or failure in a way that would have been unthinkable before Thatcher. Consider the fate of dear Douglas. In the months before the crisis much of the media invented the myth that Hurd was the man most likely to succeed. They liked him because he displayed all the characteristics of Conservatism as a branch of the diplomatic service. A toff who could read and write. That didn't make him any more or less rightwing. It just made him a man of a certain age and a certain type. And of course it made him most certainly a man. Elegant and elegiac obituaries were written for Hurd by commentators distressed to discover that the transformation of the Tory Party demanded something more – a man who knows something about modern manners, which means money and the marketplace. A man who attracts deference is no longer necessarily a man who attracts attention.

Heseltine is a toff, too. He is rich, public school and Oxford. But he has élan, lives dangerously, and isn't afraid of the people: though he'd never be a man of the people, at least he knew where they lived and visited them when there was a row on. More populist than popular, Heseltine was a contender both because he *created* politics and appeared to be in conversation with the people.

John Major benefited from Thatcher's benediction, despite the embarrassment when she anointed herself his back-seat driver. His most important feature was his lack of class – never has such a monochrome man had so much going for him. That wasn't because it made him That Woman's Man, nor because being not-much-of-a-man was less dangerous than being something stronger. It was everything to do with the snobberies that met his candidacy, nowhere more evident than in Hugo Young's literary lament for Douglas Hurd in *The Guardian* on November 27. Peregrine Worsthorne in the *Sunday Telegraph* on December 2 warned after Major's triumph that 'classlessness must not get out of hand'. Clearly, the grandees haven't given up. But the difference between before and after Thatcher is that they don't run the Tory Party.

Major the man doesn't interest the

grandeers, Major the manager reassures them, but Major the classless man can claim to represent *something*. The significance of his class difference was that he could claim some connection to the majority, having lived amidst them. His lack of education became as significant as his success in the City. Two o-levels! Not only did that place him with the majority of his generation but also his failure made him into a man with a history. He gained glamour from his father, a failed vaudeville act and failed garden-gnome maker. All this brought a modest heroism to the Majors. And maybe most important of all it located the family not in the working class but in the genteel-but-broke middle class. The Majors were thus people with ambition. But his class origins were represented in the American mode: he was a lower-middle class poor boy made good – a success. It would have been no good at all if he'd remained a poor boy – a failure.

The symbolism of all this is as serious as the substance. Major's trajectory, like Thatcher's, was taken to mark the demise of class as a collectivity in British politics. Despite all the talk of the decline of class, it remains a rich, resilient cultural and economic category. But what has been detonated by Thatcherism are the old fixities, the dominant forms of popular collectivities. Class appears increasingly as a condition, a culture, and less and less as a form of historical agency.

Thatcherism addressed the people as individuals, not through their institutions. And of course this coincided with the collapse of the institutionalised expression of class identities within the working class. A Left which, fatally, conflated the working class with the labour movement, was swiftly outmanoeuvred by a new Right which spoke directly to the people, not as 'the masses' but as individuals. For Thatcherism, and it seems for post-Thatcherism, too, the popular classes have metamorphosed – in fact they have made the working class disappear. The people are the middle class and the poor. This allows class to be re-interpreted: the middle class succeed by self-improvement. The iconography of the poor represents them as victims rather than the authors of their own history, as deprived, depressed and disorganised.

What Major's post-Thatcherism shares with its predecessor is the conviction that there is no *organised* class collectivity. Thatcher's class background was expressed only to deny class. What she did was to individualise the experience of class by de-institutionalising it. She simply ignored the institutions of organised labour. She made them irrelevant.

Despite having a background that most of us would have regarded as a bit posh – after all a grocer's shop, an alderman for a dad, and grammar school education stationed her above 75% of her contemporaries – her class came to be defined not by *us*, but by



Class of the 80s: Thatcherism's free individuals

them. Thus the mandarin designated Thatcher the acceptable face of the masses, when in fact she was middle-class middle-England. Nonetheless, that proved to be a much more potent redoubt than the establishment, from which to resist the rabble holding the nation to ransom. After all, the establishment had, historically, felt some obligation to the masses, even if they hated them for it. The middle class of middle-England felt no such *responsibilities*, and therefore no twinge of respect for people's *rights* to resistance. The point was that Thatcher hated the working class with an intensity peculiar to the petty bourgeoisie, that class which could be relied on to resist working-class pressure because it only ever felt victimised by it.

The third characteristic of the November coup was sex. Or rather the March of the Men. 'The Battle of the Sexes' the *London Evening Standard* dubbed it. Major's first mistake was to omit women entirely from his cabinet. Thatcher hadn't appointed any either, but her absence clearly demanded a new presence. What became clear was that the march of the men would be halted, it had to be: both feminism and Thatcherism – though for entirely different reasons – now made it impossible to purge women from the political stage for long. Labour women immediately exposed Major's mistake (four women are in Kinnock's shadow cabinet, and half the Labour women MPs are front-benchers). And Tory

women swiftly protested. Men were constituted as a political problem, official. Thatcherism always depended on Thatcher's gender and the nuances of her sexuality for its force. Only a woman could have done it. And yet her power as party leader, if not as prime minister, was always *contingent*. It depended on the denial of difference. She was never to take the side of women. Her gender was to be suppressed except insofar as she was able to give a feminine endorsement to what was, in fact, a profoundly patriarchal project.

She tried to suppress sexual difference, denying its difficulties and the differential effects on men and women, because that would have meant honouring a history of political struggle, stamina and personal pain among women that had no place in the Conservative conversation. At the same time she increasingly inhabited an intensely sexualised persona. This lent a wanton emotionality to her *modus operandi*, it was a kind of emotional terrorism. It was certainly excessive. It was probably necessary to secure her survival. After all, she had few weapons available to her as a woman, and she used the only ones she possessed, those assigned to women. This contradiction lies at the centre of Thatcher and Thatcherism. It is a contradiction that despite her own difficulty with it, puts gender at the heart of Thatcherism, both as a style and a strategy.

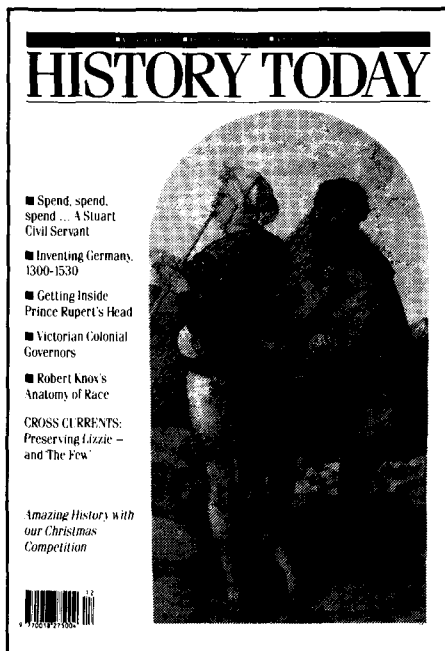
She made it up, made herself up, so to say, as she went along. That made her interesting. The timbre of Hurd's or

'What she implied in her address to other women was not that she, and they, were equals, but that she was exceptional'



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Howe's or Heseltine's or Major's masculinity isn't interesting. We already know all about it. Say grey suits and you've said it all, because, despite their differences, their sexuality is inert, predictable and unproblematic precisely where Thatcher's femininity is perplexing, active, diverse, and, most important of all, surprising. She made herself and her party the centre of attention because she was the only woman among the men. Manners put her in the middle. But she claimed our attention because as spectators and protagonists we participated in a process in which we, and she, changed.

Barbara Castle noticed when Margaret Thatcher became Tory leader that she looked as if she was in love – in love with power. That love affair transformed her, she acquired a grandeur that was achieved not so much by a dignified distance as by bruising beligerence which confused her enemies. You always felt that Neil Kinnock really wanted to throw a punch across the dispatch box, but being an old-fashioned lad he seemed to think it wasn't done to hit a woman. It took a man with no manners, the Beast of Bolsover, to match her. Power also contributed to Thatcher's metamorphosis as a middle-aged woman: at an age when most women are asset-stripped by a culture that denies their autonomous desire as well as denying their desirableness, Margaret Thatcher's sexual resources seemed to expand.

She was re-fashioned for our collective consumption, and the imaginary or symbolic dialogue with her public transformed her image, her voice, her teeth, her hair. Her power transformed her sexuality, her style as a woman. Her mutations were among the keys to her modernity, she was a multiple personality, the housewife in a flak jacket, a manager, a wife and a warrior. The politics of fashion during the 1980s gave us the shoulder. Power dressing gave women, and Thatcher, too, the architecture of the suit without its uniformity. Suits – or costumes as they used to be called – are sexy but safe. Above the waist she boldly synchronised shoulder, bosom and smile as only a woman would. All were statements about both sex and power. What she did in every gesture was to make it absolutely clear that she *wanted* something, she wanted power, she loved it. And women loved that. She was thus a *demanding and desiring* woman. Her pleasure was in power.

Her modernity lay in the mobility and multiplicity of her identities. The endless confusion about her identity – was she a woman or a man in disguise? – was misplaced. She exposed the limits of masculinity by transcending femininity and appropriating masculinity. She was always a woman and she was always more than a man. What she exemplified was the way that in these times it is women who transcend the limits of their gender.

But Thatcher refused to engage women. She would not use her own experience as a woman to endorse their experience of themselves. They could admire her but they could not be like her. It can be no accident that in every general election won by Margaret Thatcher the Tories suffered a significant bleeding of women's votes. Thatcher's own inclination and her speechwriters' ignorance produced a peculiarly regressive rhetoric about women, because the dominant themes of Thatcherism demanded the subordination of material support for women, something which could only be socially resourced. Thus Thatcher's anti-egalitarianism and anti-statism left her with only one icon – the housewife. She only ever addressed women as housewives (something she herself had never been), and thus while claiming solidarity with other women she in fact subordinated her own sex. Other women were exactly that – other.

What she implied in her address to other women was not that she, and they, were equals, but that she was exceptional. Her antipathy to the state and egalitarianism meant that she had nothing to offer the modern woman other than her image. Heroism and ingenuity describe British women's efforts to organise their work and their personal relationships and responsibilities. But it is not that private and informal networking that Thatcher celebrates when she invokes the joys of motherhood. Actually she doesn't talk about motherhood much. That might mean talking about relationships. She doesn't do that. Hence housework: the domestic world is invoked as household *management*. The paradigm of active citizenship is the housewife, a creature realised in service, not in solidarity, in a language of responsibilities not rights.

She has supported Mary Whitehouse and Victoria Gillick, women whose crusades against sexual pleasure expressed an authoritarian-populist pessimism about the price paid by women. Both believe that women are undone, defeated by desire. Thatcher has been represented by the Right as a liberal when it comes to sex and by the Left as a repressive reactionary. She is neither. She is a fatalist. Thatcher has always supported repressive sexual legislation, but has always forgiven her minister's misdemeanours. But this is not the contradiction that it first appears to be. It is entirely consistent with the Conservative culture that represents men as babies or beasts. Modern women are made of sterner stuff: the *British Social Attitudes* surveys during the Thatcher era have revealed a chasm between women's common sense and Thatcherism. If anything women are the 'permissive', egalitarian and democratic sex.

And in 1990 Thatcher's language has seemed increasingly estranged from her own experience – her contemporaneous invocation of the winter sales,

**'Her
personal
power over
men was
the only
thing she
gave to
women'**



woolly hats and thermos flasks insulted her natural constituency, the thrifty, self-sufficient bargain-hunter. While during the leadership crisis she mobilised inept cricketing metaphors which placed her madly on men's territory. Her success was achieved by her escape from the female condition rather than her embrace of it. She repudiated feminism much as she repudiated femininity, for both were associated with a condition of subordination. Her efforts to prevent the proliferation of powerful women – hence the absence of any sisterhood to sustain her during her reign – left her defenceless against the power of men. And yet that was the very thing which she had seemed to control. Her personal power over men was the *only* thing which she gave to women.

But what her demise revealed was that her personal power was no match for their collective power once they needed her no more.

One of the remarkable features of the coup was the gendering of it. Yes, there were women in the campaign – among the dissidents were Edwina Currie and Emma Nicholson. They were important. But were they instrumental? No, not as far as the media were concerned. Whatever else it was, the coup was a masculine plot, which was defined as such by the ubiquitous grey suit. *The Times* on November 22 went further in its suggestion of masculine menace, the grey suits became *eminences grises*. We learned that the enigmatic but powerful 1922 Committee was expected to 'dispatch the men in grey suits' and *The Times* began its editorial thus: 'In went the grey suits...'

Men were getting a taste of their own medicine, they were being dehumanised, defined by dress in a way that was utterly familiar to women. But if women have been demeaned by that, these men were being placed differently – the grey suit signified their collective difference – the gender of their corporate and class power. Here was a woman, marooned in a Westminster gulag of grey suits. Why else did people begin to relent when she went down? Partly, people so relished her last performance as Queen of the Dispatch box and realised that whoever her successor, whether kinder or gentler, he would not be as good as she was, for she was a woman who managed to be more than any man.

Ironically, the only time she identified with the reality rather than the rhetoric of the female experience was in her interview in *The Times* in the week of her demise. 'When a woman is strong, she is strident. If a man is strong, gosh he's a good guy. Some of the things that have been said about me...but never mind.' Then at last she was able to share with feminism a critique of men's scorn for strong women, and in so doing she was able to share an experience all women know something about – defeat. Losing like this was one of the best things she did for women. ●

After Thatcher Ten More Years

What must John Major do, asks
Sarah Benton, if populist
conservatism is to become the
dominant political voice of
the 90s

If John Major is a strategist, he could reshape the political realignment which Margaret Thatcher kicked off, then almost destroyed. Populist conservatism would become the dominant political force in Britain for the foreseeable future. Labour would then become the voice of particular, special interests: local government, national health service, public transport, the special needs of women or black people, the urban poor, and so on. Each of these would be important, at times passionate, causes. But they would remain a collection of discrete interests. They would not comprise a single, national political force. People would vote Labour, and sometimes nationalist or Liberal Democrat, or Green, in those elections which decide such local, or special, interests, and vote Conservative for national government. This is similar to the pattern in the USA, Japan and Germany, where populist or national conservatism controls national government, but social democracy, militant regionalism or sometimes radical environmentalism remain forces on special issues.

Realignment is the wrong word for this

process. It is not a matter of Conservative cowboys corralling the upwardly-mobile workers who have strayed from Labour. Rather, it is a question of re-composition. What politics is made up of, what drives and shapes political discourse and decision, is in flux. This makes it possible for a political leadership – Labour or Conservative – to reform its community of political interest. By that I mean not just the social composition of its supporters; I mean too what makes its politics: what types of political conflict it deals with; what its constituencies want from politics and how they think they can get it. Labour's old community of interest was composed of working class and professionals looking to the state to protect them, and to redistribute power in their interest. That political community no longer exists.

What is in Major's favour is the changing relations of nation-state and class, and their changing roles as determinants of politics. Actual economic decision-making is moving out of the nation state, into the boardrooms of multinational companies, into international forums, from the EC to the Group of 7,

from the Cairns Group to Gatt, from the Pacific forum to the UN. These are primarily concerned with trade and movements of capital (and labour), though they may carry settlements of political conflicts in their wake (oil and Palestine; Japan's North Islands and trade with the Soviet Union) and also become the site of environmental politics.

On the other hand, regional or local forms of government are becoming the focus for industrial development strategies; thus, someone who wishes to shape West Midlands engineering will look to local structures, including local state bodies, or to Brussels, rather than London. Similarly in the US, devisers of economic strategy are more often to be found in state capitals than in Washington.

This leaves the nation-state with two dominant roles; as the negotiator in international forums, and the symbolic bearer of national unity. Chancellor Kohl's recent victory in the German elections is, in part, due to his adept playing of both these roles. Thatcher's failure to be either symbolic unifier or effective negotiator in part caused her ejection as leader. The fact that she failed does not mean that no populist Conservative could marry the two roles, though there is plenty of conflict between them which an opposition could exploit. For, despite her failure, populist Conservatism still has a lot going for it if it is directed strategically and adroitly. Populist Conservatism has an ease with, and affinity to, national symbolism which social democracy does not. What sort of politics produces effective national negotiators is more complex, for it is not at all clear what sort of international agreement is in the best interests of what sort of capitalism – populist, multinational, financial or in any other variety. Here the political market is particularly wide open for any leadership which can produce a settlement between the demand for free trade, the interest of consumers, the Third World and sectors of labour. Populist conservatism does not have an inherent advantage here – and significantly, both President Bush and Chancellor Kohl dropped their nationalist rhetoric to be effective negotiators in the discussions on eastern Europe before the Gulf crisis. When both Bush and Thatcher turned to nationalist rhetoric rather than negotiation over the Gulf crisis, they found it did not work. They'd pressed the patriotic button and got a flat response.

Whether or not Labour can challenge conservatism for the role of national leader thus depends, in the 1990s, on how far it can create an appealing symbolic role for the nation-state, for it is not going to wither away by the year 2000, and how it treats the aim and potential of international negotiations.

John Major has made it clear what sort of party he wants to create, and why it has the potential to be the majority party of the 1990s. The driving force of his conservatism will be a denial that

class is a determinant of politics; instead, ambition – the essential middle-class virtue – will take its place. It will celebrate the strength of the self-made man and be hostile to all those structures and ideas that inhibit self-making. It will continue the Thatcherite destruction of public, collective life, leaving the nation as the only meaningful collective form.



Of course, class is a factor in politics, as are race and religion. In the economic sense, class is ineradicable, and a classless society in a capitalist economy is an absurdity. But class is only a determinant of national politics if national politics are driven by a conflict between capital and labour. If one essential foundation of populist conservatism is to make a classless appeal to men and women of ambition and patriotic fervour, the other foundation is to sever public policy from the conflict of capital and labour. Rather, public policy has to be seen to be pursuing the goal of classlessness, providing rewards for the ambitious, not those who went to Eton. The decisions which are driven by class conflict – a conflict of capital and labour – cannot be seen to constitute public policy, nor can such decisions be taken in publicly-accountable groups. Thus, successful populist conservatism must produce a separation between the rhetoric of the public arena, giving politics an intensely symbolic, almost allegorical quality; and the substance of much policy-making which remains esoteric, and in the hands of an elite outside the public arena.

It is this twin-track policy – the classlessness of public policy, the 'private' nature of decisions affecting class relations – which requires strategic leadership. Thatcherism followed this strategy. Class was excised from politics by, among other tactics, redefining labour as the trade union bureaucrats of the corporate state rather than as an exploited, productive force. And Thatcherism speeded the removal of economic decisions from the public, political realm. One of its signal achievements was to toughen the secrecy surrounding company decisions; it was Tory Euro-MPs who defeated the EC's Vredeling directive on 'opening the books' to the workforce; Thatcher's ministers who locked every decision involving a company, from Westland to British Aero-space, in a strongbox of 'commercial secrecy'; and her ministers who slid with such ease straight from cabinet into the closed boardrooms of our major companies.

John Major has only to continue this pattern. He need only re-affirm the distinction between decisions on movements of capital and international trade, which remain opaque; and those which are seen to determine public consumption. The first have to be expressed, if they are made public at all, as too complex and remote for ordinary people to understand. Then if things go wrong,

Major can always blame the Ecu, ERM, EMU, Gatt, or simply the French. However, decisions known to affect public consumption, like tax, credit and the interest rate, have to be recast as simple morality tales of freedom and choice, rewards and punishments, mutual sacrifice and suffering. Less of a storyteller than Thatcher, nonetheless Major has already come up with: 'If it's not hurting it's not working' in the autumn statement, and inflation as a crime against the poor in his speech to the 1990 party conference.

The immediate problem facing John Major, in such a recomposition of Conservative politics, comes from his own party. If John Major is claiming 'the people' for conservatism, he has to let us know who are the people, who are not the people, and who are the enemies of the people. It was Thatcher's mastery of this form of address which assured her political dominance through the 80s; she could conjure an enemy at the citadel gates out of thin air, and, if stuck, there were always a few inside. Significantly, she began her reign talking about the 'swamping' of aliens; Major began his by condemning racist bigots in his own party. The Tories got John Major precisely because he is not a warrior leader and will stop the 'not one of us' syndrome. He must plan on being able to provide his followers, especially fickle Essex man, with economic rewards, where Thatcher was prepared, in lean years, to make do with political and symbolic ones. What matter a hike in interest rates if the besieged citizens could have Scargill's head on the city walls?

For most of Thatcher's reign, Labour provided her with a ready-made enemy if the barrel of demons was getting a bit low. For as long as Labour was, and is, associated with venerating the state for its own sake it will be vulnerable to this usage. And the last thing Labour needs to do is to fill the gap of a vacant enemy which otherwise Major might have to find in his own party or in foreigners. Alternatively, if Labour merely presents the state, or regional government (in which both John Smith and Bryan Gould are interested) as administrative good sense, then it fails to invest state forms with the political, or symbolic, meaning which they have to carry.

Here we come to the question of how far Labour's policy reviews equip it to come out fighting, on its own grounds. Do they offer a different notion of the nation-state? Do they challenge the Thatcherite distinction between what public policy is concerned with and what belongs in private? Do they define the goals of an international policy, the areas of agreement with other countries, or national groups, on which new policies can be slowly built up, and those to which Labour would be implacably opposed? And do they help define what Labour's political community of interest will be, and how this can be converted into an electoral majority?

Probably not. Let us take it for granted that Labour's policy review process was useful, it had to be started, it had some worthwhile results. Let us assume that much still needs to be done. Let us then ask *how* that discussion can take place, with what aims, rather than what the policy outcomes ought to be (for it is a prerequisite of creative policy discussion that you don't decide in advance what the policy outcome must be).

When Labour undertook its policy reviews it went out of its way *not* to invite the involvement of intellectuals (using this word in its non-professional sense). Labour's own backbenchers complained bitterly that they were excluded and had had no chance to discuss the reviews until they were virtually finalised.

Ask a Labour leader why this exclusion happened, and he or she will say that they had to keep out the crazies. The purpose of the reviews was to re-create a modern, sensible Labour Party in the control of professional party managers – not allow their heads to be hijacked by loony Lefties or union bureaucrats. The politics of exclusion shaped the whole. Whatever the rationale, the result is to starve Labour of the allies and ideas it needs – and to isolate intellectuals from the political debate. They are thus not part of the political community which Labour has to recreate. As employment in a high-status state no longer delivers intellectuals into Labour's political community, this is a particularly serious problem.

Labour cannot stop the recomposition of politics. But for as long as it excludes vital ideas and information from the public arena, it assists its decomposition. Labour's enemy is not the idea of 'self-making'. It is secrecy, locked doors, helplessness, passivity; it is the exclusion from public debate of the enduring problems of poverty, unemployment, exploitation of people and resources. It is the unsolved problem, of unresponsive bureaucracies, and the experience of the state as oppressive and shackling. It is, in the age of telecommunication, lack of knowledge and ideas and voice.

Anything which attacks these great forces, Labour should espouse, from right-to-know legislation and public, political debate on investment and production, through constitutional reform to democratic accountability of international forums like the EC. In short, if Labour is to use the political flux to reform its own political community it has to find a symbolic role for the state; invest regional government and international community with political meaning; force into the public arena, and politicise, the decisions which take place behind closed doors and make people feel helpless; and convince us that it is the hero who can both protect us from harm and liberate us from oppression.●

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'What politics is made up of, what drives and shapes political discourse and decision, is in flux'



After Thatcher Business As Usual

Does Margaret
Thatcher's departure
oblige Labour to
change tack?
*Charlie Leadbeater and
Martin Jacques talk to
Gordon Brown about
Labour in the
post-Thatcher era*

Gordon Brown MP was born in 1951 in Glasgow. His father was a Church of Scotland minister and his mother a housewife. He was educated at Kirkcaldy High School and Edinburgh University, where he was rector between 1972 and 1975; from 1976 to 1980 he lectured in politics at Glasgow University. He was then current affairs editor for Scottish Television until 1983 when he was elected MP for Dunfermline East. He is currently shadow secretary of state for trade and industry.

How do you think politics has changed with Mrs Thatcher's departure and John Major's succession to the leadership?

Two things are important. One is that Thatcherism has failed. That's quite clearly seen not just by the public at large but by the manner in which the Conservative Party had to get rid of Mrs Thatcher. And it's not just an ideological failure, it's also an economic failure.

Second, what we are seeing in Mr Major is an attempt to change style, to change some of the rhetoric, and perhaps to change one or two of the policies – not necessarily out of conviction, but to move with public opinion – while trying to hold on to what is essentially the failed ideology that was tried in the 1980s. We have had a government that tried to operate an economy as well as a society according to blunt, free-market principles. It's clearly failed. What we don't have in Mr Major is an alternative ideology. We've got a change of style, and a lot of rhetoric about a classless society and opportunity for all – but we do not have a way forward.

Hasn't he recognised the limits of

Thatcherism? He wants to change the style, and he is changing the rhetoric: but isn't this also going to open the way to a different sort of approach? Education, and the poll tax, are clearly targeted, and Europe is another issue.

I've never believed that a change in style or rhetoric is a change in substance. What I do think will happen, and what I predict will happen is that Mr Major will recognise that there are electoral pressures upon the Conservative Party; he will make one or two modifications, which he will suggest are dramatic and significant modifications, as if he was trying to move to the middle ground. But the economics of Mr Major will always pull him back. And if the Conservatives were in a position to win the next election, then after that election, having made the concession to the electorate, we'd be back to where we started with Mrs Thatcher. I do not see the ideology of Mr Major being that different from Mrs Thatcher's.

But isn't it rather beside the point whether Mr Major believes in the ideology of Thatcherism? The fact is, it's a very diffe-

rent style of government, and the fact is he's open to different pressures, which Mrs Thatcher resisted. So on the serious issues, he's already signalled he's going to move – and this is going to present you with a different kind of political challenge. Because he *has* said he'll move on education. He *has* said he'll move on the poll tax. And he's showing signs of moving on Europe. Now you may, initially, dismiss that as just style. But the fact is that over time, without necessarily having any grand vision, it's going to open up a new kind of Tory approach.

The point is, there is an alternative agenda within the country, a new agenda for the 1990s, to which the Conservative Party has very little relevance. They can't grasp the fact that things have changed, and that the challenges of the 1990s are rather different from those of the 1980s. In 1979, Mrs Thatcher could say to the people of this country that the whole goal of her policy was to set the individual free from the state – she said there was too much collectivism, and taxation and so on. But as we begin the 1990s it's quite clear that there is too little training, too little education, too little community, too little fairness, too little research and development. The key question now is how the community can act as a community. How you can have active and accountable government to rectify weaknesses and flaws that damage individual potential.

And that can only be solved by government working with the people of this country, and on behalf of the people of this country. It's about how a government working on behalf of the individual can set individual potentials free. And that's a completely different agenda, unrelated to crude, free-market ideology.

But isn't it the case that with the Heseltine review, the Tories are now going to make the running on the poll tax? They are going to be the ones setting out to review it, to change it. And by the time of the next election it's going to be less of an issue than it is now.

I challenge the Conservatives to abolish the poll tax. The central feature of the poll tax is that it is unrelated to ability to pay. The argument between Labour and Conservatives is whether you should abolish it. Although people may welcome refinements that give them a bit of breathing space as individual tax payers, and although the Conservatives may plough a great deal of money into the poll tax over the next few months, they will not solve that basic problem. That is a clear dividing line between the political parties of this country. We want to abolish it. They want merely to amend it.

You have benefited in the Labour Party from Tory divisions over Europe, of which a lot have had to do with Mrs Thatcher's handling of her cabinet. Major has clearly set out a different way of handling the issue. He is sceptical about a lot of what's

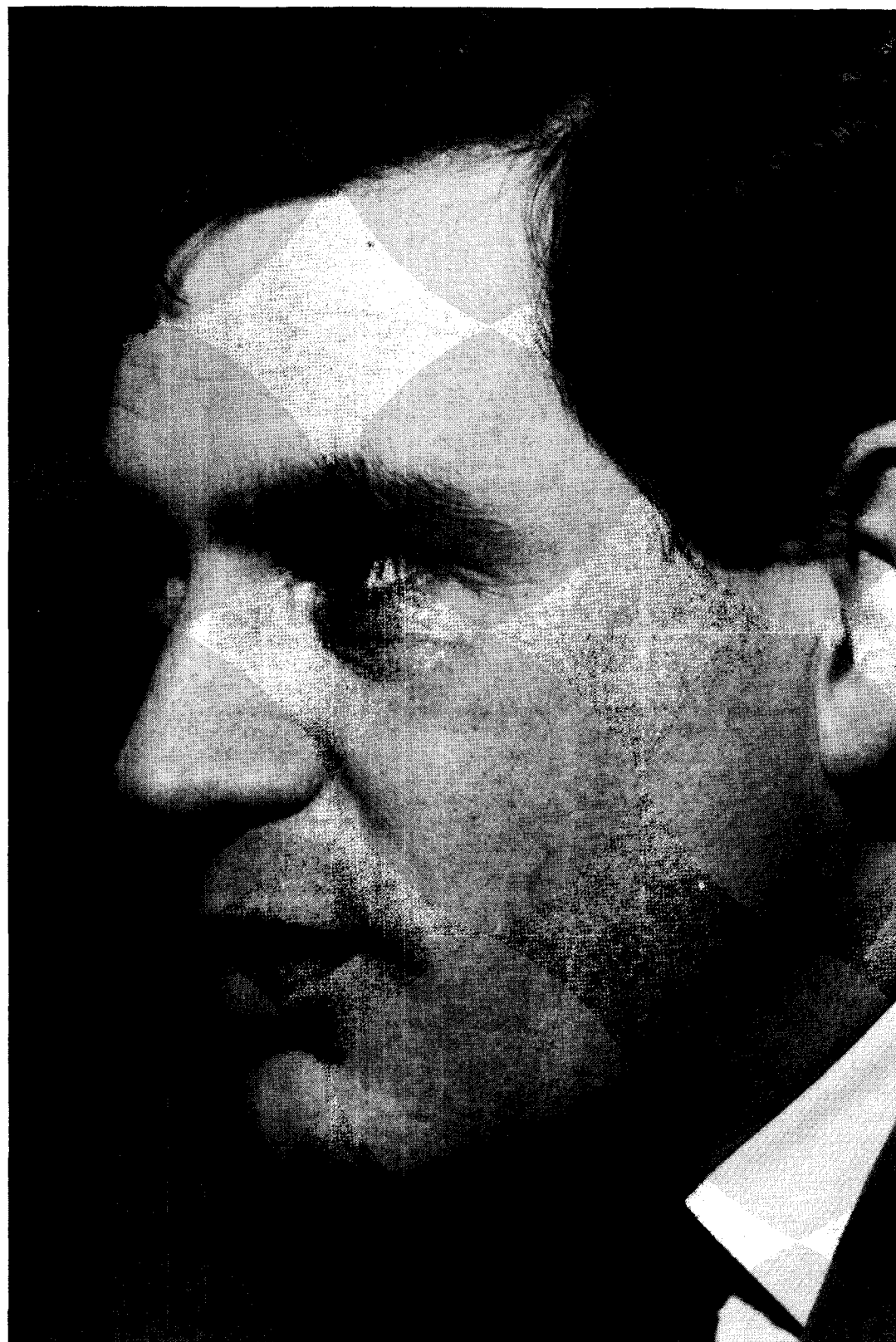
going on in Europe, but he's said that he's going to approach it in a different sort of way. Now isn't it the case that the way you've benefited from Europe in the past — from Tory divisions — is now going to be far more difficult for you to do. And in that way, your own positions on Europe will come in for more scrutiny. So the idea that you will agree to a central European bank, or EMU, only on the basis of commitment to full employment, is as pie in the sky as the Madrid conditions for joining the ERM.

The difference on economic and monetary union is that Mr Major has kept his party in a position where they are prepared to rule out economic and monetary union. He is a hawk on this issue: he is more in line with the 'No Turning Back' group than Mr Hurd, or certainly Mr Heseltine. There are enormous divisions within the Conservative Party, that did not go away on the Wednesday morning after Mr Major became prime minister. They'll try to paper over the cracks for some time, but the divisions are still there. At the end of the day, I suspect that Mr Major's position is that he would rule out further steps towards economic and monetary union, if he could get away with it. Whereas the Labour Party position is that we do not do so, and we have said that we are prepared to support change in Europe, and greater integration — as long as measures that are necessary to allow for greater convergence of the economies, including regional and industrial policies, actually take place.

Where do you draw from and what have you rejected in Labour's traditions?

I used to study the history of socialism and the distinguishing feature of democratic socialism in Britain, as opposed to crude, free-market ideology, is that we believe that if individuals are to achieve their full potential then the community must act as a community, to enable that potential to develop. I think people would now accept that the state has got to be both active and accountable in the way it ensures that individuals have access to health care, to education, to affordable housing, to childcare; particularly at points in the life-cycle where things are difficult for individuals and for families. It's also true of the economy, where I believe that for prosperity to be achieved, the government and industry must be involved in that process. It cannot be left to crude, free-market forces.

The theme that runs through all this is the idea of a public interest. That there is a public agenda, and that there is a public good. It's not that individuals must sacrifice their own prosperity for that of the community; but that the community, by acting as a community, can enhance both individual potential and the prosperity of an economy. That is the distinguishing feature. And that leads you to ask: what can government do? How is the power of government used? In what form is it used? It leads on to all sorts of questions about the role of the state as enabler; as partner; as



Photography: Abel Lagos

financier; in some cases as owner; as sponsor; as catalyst — not necessarily a unilinear or a uniform role. And it also leads on to huge questions that we have not properly answered in the past, but are beginning to answer now: about the devolution of power; about decentralisation; about communities being able to manage their own affairs; about devolution particularly to regional levels and tiers of government.

So you would see the theme of a future Labour government as contributing to refashioning the role of the state in society. Let's take the welfare state. Isn't it the case

**Gordon:
'What we
don't have in
Mr Major
is an
alternative
ideology'**



that all Labour has managed to do here is to say: 'Look, what the Tories are doing is a mess. We need to spend more on education and health.' A lot of people would agree with that, but there's been no real agenda to reform education and health, and to really change the welfare state; to change the way it's delivered, to make it more efficient, more consumer responsive.

If you take health care, I think we have put forward a vision that's not purely based on curative treatments, but also on preventative care, giving more freedom to the individual as the patient to take control over his own or her own life. And that's related particularly to



the campaigns on women's health, which is a vastly important issue, but has never been fully recognised by past governments.

And on the second question, of education, I think we are within grasp of a new view of the potential for people through education – lifelong, recurrent, permanent education. Education at any point, at any study. I think that is within our grasp. I'm not saying you can achieve it overnight, but I think that is the vision that is there. And that is completely different from the previous idea of education, which was education for all from five to 16, and for a minority after 16, with sub-standard vocational training for those who didn't get to university or college. That wasn't how people put it, but that effectively was the limit of what was available to people. So education is absolutely central. It's not just central to the release of individual potential; it's absolutely central, also, to the other objective – of economic prosperity.

It seems to me that rather than saying that nothing has changed with the Major election, you could say that a lot has changed. Basically, politics is going in your direction. Rather than being defensive and saying: 'no, Major hasn't opted for any new agenda', you should be saying that Major is moving onto your ground – he is talking about education, and health, and Europe, and the poll tax. You should be much more ambitious and imaginative: you should let yourself go a bit more. You're still too cautious. You're still bedeviled by the cautiousness of the post-1987 general election period.

I feel that in what I've said to you, I've emphasised two things. One is, I do believe that Mr Major will change, but there is no ideological change: there is no recognition that Conservative ideology has been out of touch with the outlook of the British people, and with the challenges of the 1990s. The second thing is that we're not saying that we object to Mr Major because of x, y, or z policy. What we are saying is that there is a real dividing line in political beliefs and perspectives.

Let me put it to you that what you have said is completely wrong. That by the time you get to the next election, what politics will be about is pragmatic adjustment. There will be very little to choose between your policy on Europe, and theirs. They'll be committed to changing the poll tax; so will you, if in an uncertain way. They'll be committed to education; so will you. On the economy, I'm not sure there is much difference between your economic policies, given the constraints of the ERM entry. By the time we get to the next election, what will not distinguish Labour is this great divide. It will be style and trust. It will come down to a question of pragmatic decisions about trust. And on that basis, they are likely to win.

I don't think your analysis is right. Since 1987 we have done three things. The first thing was to look again at our

policies, and apply enduring values to the challenges of the 1990s; and we've done that in a way that I think is generally appreciated throughout the country. The second thing, certainly, was to expose the weaknesses of the Conservative Party; and by exposing the failure of its economic policy, as well as the unfairness of its social policy – the incompetence and mismanagement, as well as the injustice of those policies – we have had a great deal of success, both in opinion poll terms and also in dividing the cabinet and bringing down the prime minister. And the third thing, is that the opportunity is now there, with Mrs Thatcher having gone, to put forward a clear, ideological alternative.

Given the change in prime minister, do you think there is anything that you must now do differently?

What has happened is that we now have the opportunity to concentrate more on our distinctive policies, and more on an alternative agenda. Now that Mrs Thatcher has gone, the agenda everybody is looking at is what political parties will offer this country for the 1990s. I believe that what I am saying faces up to those challenges; applies enduring principles that are far more in accord with the views and values of the British people; and not only comes up with imaginative solutions in particular policy areas but also has a dominating theme, which is that there is a public interest, that people see themselves as part of the community, and that government must be active but accountable. In many ways the resistance to public involvement and public engagement in solving many of our social and economic problems in the past, has not been an ideological resistance to government working with people, or government working with industry, but the form and the accountability of that public action.

That's fair enough, but you've said that already: what you've just said is not new; it's a general statement of principle, if you like. What I'd like you to tell me is in what areas will you now push forward, given the change in the Tory Party. I take it, for example, that it's no accident that the Labour Party has just issued statements on health and education.

I think you misunderstand. The education statement was planned last May. The whole campaign on education was planned then. And the health statement was in place long before Mrs Thatcher resigned. Neil Kinnock said, I think in May, that he expected Thatcher to go: so our planning has been based not on Mrs Thatcher staying, but on the likelihood of her going.

So no change?

What I'm saying is, the fact that you've got a new leader – and therefore criticisms of Mrs Thatcher's style are not the most important item on the agenda any more – gives us an opportunity, rather than giving us difficulties. Because it forces on to the agenda the

**Charlie:
'It would be
wrong for
Labour to
deceive itself
into thinking
that this
wasn't a
sharp break'**



real, ideological divide between Conservatives and Labour, irrespective of people's emotions about Mrs Thatcher and her style of government. So it gives us a chance to put forward our own, distinctive views. And it's happened in the context of economic failure. I don't think that's going to leave the political agenda, particularly after what will probably be a relatively short honeymoon period for the prime minister. You've got to accept there's going to be a honeymoon period, but the reality is economic failure. And the ideology that was supposed to combat economic failure has been exposed as unsuccessful. An alternative ideology is not available from the Conservative Party – other than an attempt to meet the likelihood of electoral rejection, by changing the policies a little. And yet at the same time, Labour does have an alternative view, as well as alternative policies.

Maybe what's actually happening, now that Mrs Thatcher's gone, is that it's not going to be a clear fight between two ideological systems. What may have happened in fact is some kind of, in effect, passive revolution by the Conservatives which keeps a bit of the Thatcherite legacy – more or less the bit that Labour has inherited anyway – and meanwhile shifts on to Labour's ground in other areas. So it's not as straightforward as you suggest.

I'll put the issue another way round. If the Conservatives were seriously changing then they would abolish the poll tax in my view, not tinker with it. They would abandon the tax policies that brought the 1988 budget. They would admit the economic errors of the last few years, which basically was engineering a consumer boom without sustained long-term investment in the economy. They would rescind the cuts in training, and not only do that, but enter into a partnership with industry to re-skill the British people. And they would have a supply-side strategy for the economy as well as a new European and international strategy.

But Gordon, they're not going to say that. Even if Heseltine had been elected leader, he wouldn't have said that. Even though he would have marked a very sharp break, it would all have been painted in terms of continuity, because that's how political traditions work. But it would be wrong for Labour thereby to deceive itself into thinking that what was happening wasn't a sharp break.

What I am saying is that the Conservatives will change for electoral reasons. I think at root the ideology is no different.

As we look into the 1990s, do you want to be leader of the Labour Party at some point?

I said my ambition is to serve in a Labour cabinet under Neil Kinnock, and that is the limit of my ambition. ●

Charlie Leadbeater is industrial editor of the Financial Times.

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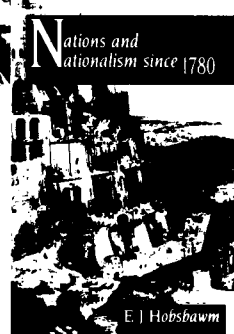
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New World Order

Conflict And Co-operation

There is much talk of a new world order. But **Susan Strange** sees its origins more in the changed economic environment than the end of the cold war

For the past five months since the invasion of Kuwait, I believe we may have been witnessing the slow erosion of American unilateralism in the conduct of international relations. By this I mean that, for all Bush's bombastic rhetoric, especially in the run-up to the November elections, the United States has actually been paying much more attention to other people's opinions than it has ever done before. Baker's peregrinations, Shevardnadze's transatlantic shuttling, the huddles at the United Nations – all these are every different from the go-it-alone behaviour of President Reagan in Panama only recently, or earlier in his invasion of Grenada. And in the past, who else was consulted about Kennedy's venture into the Bay Of Pigs – let alone the escalation of the Vietnam war?

If this is so, a question worth pondering is whether this means that a major change in world politics is on the way. Is a new era, if not a new world order, in the making? I believe it may be, but not because the cold war is over, nor because the United States is a hegemonic power in decline, but because states are reacting to changes in the

world economy.

The evidence that the Americans have abandoned unilateralism, to be sure, is a bit mixed. Washington consulted no one (except the Saudis) about their initial decision to send ships, troops, and weapons to Saudi Arabia. And all their subsequent decisions on the military build-up have still been, effectively, unilateral.

On the other hand, they put considerable diplomatic effort into getting support for the Security Council resolutions condemning Saddam Hussein's invasion and calling for economic sanctions against Iraq. And now, since the vote in the Security Council on November 29, it is clear that the US did not want to attack Iraq without the say-so of the United Nations.

War or no war, what in retrospect has been striking is the unanimity of the supporting consensus of condemnation of Iraq, even though the victim, Kuwait, was no model of a socially progressive liberal democracy. The argument that the real concern is not for the state of Kuwait but for a secure supply of oil is unconvincing. In 1951, when Mossadeq nationalised Anglo-Iranian, the world managed very well without Iranian oil.

'While competition for market shares has got hotter, governments anxiety to demonstrate their devotion to peaceful co-operation has never been more evident'



So it did in 1956 when the Suez Canal was blocked. So it did in 1973 when Opec and the market quadrupled the price. We have repeatedly been shown that demand for oil is highly inelastic and that, when prices rise, new supplies can be found.

No, the reason why this particular invasion has been so universally condemned is different. It is that during the 1980s there has been something of a sea-change in international relations in which governments the world over have at last come to realise that they do not particularly need more territory, but that they do want some security for the territory over which they exercise authority. It has taken a while for the penny to drop. But it has at last become obvious that while states are still competing with one another, actual acreage does not help them win. For the conflict is over shares of wealth, and these days wealth is derived not from land, or even from heavy industries (the famous commanding heights of the economy) that are built up on land. Wealth is derived from the value-added in goods and services sold on world markets. So it is world market shares that are the name of the game for national governments. And

as Hong Kong or Singapore or little Taiwan have shown, you do not need more land to be a winner in this new game.

This may not mean that we can assume states will never again go to war. For years to come there will be situations in which their leaders feel they have no choice but to do so. There may even be situations like the present Gulf crisis where a regional power in desperation attacks a neighbour and where a great power concludes it has no choice but to intervene lest a strategically important region becomes even more unstable. Even more likely, there will still be situations in which states go to war, but over people, not over territory. There will be conflicts over the security and autonomy of people for whom a state feels responsible, or is held to be responsible – as in the Falklands war. Or there will be conflicts started by people who want to defect from the state because they feel their security or their autonomy is no longer safe within it. Such would be the case if, in the end, India and Pakistan go to war over Kashmir. Yet even here, the contrast with the past is striking. Despite a degree of popular tension at least as high as before when war did result, this time both governments have shown unprecedented restraint. Both are acutely aware of the high cost that a war would bring to their social cohesion as well as to their economic development. Both seem to be convinced that the new market game is more important to them than the old war games. Even so, there may still be other cases where such restraint is lacking and where religion will fan the flames of nationalism, and mediation and conciliation will fail to prevent the outbreak of war. But for the industrialised and semi-developed countries, I believe we may have passed a significant milestone in world politics.

So for reasons which, in my view, have more to do with technology and global finance than with class conflicts, we can now see that both Lenin and Kautsky were right – and both were also wrong. Kautsky was castigated for arguing back in 1915 that capitalism would lead to 'ultra-imperialism' in which the major capitalist countries would join together to counter the falling rate of profit at home by collectively repressing and exploiting the colonial peoples. Against this, Lenin insisted that national capitals in competition with each other would finally be led into imperialist wars with each other over control of territory.

What do we see today? Lenin was right in so far as some governments of capitalist countries behave as if they were playing a zero-sum game, protecting their own markets against foreign imports while trying to penetrate the markets of others. The Americans' use of the Strategic Impediments Initiative against Japan and the newly industrialised countries is a prime example. But

he was wrong to conclude that this sort of economic aggressiveness necessarily leads on to imperialist wars. On the contrary, while the competition for market shares has got hotter, the anxiety of governments these days to demonstrate their devotion to peaceful co-operation, to negotiation and mutual understanding, has never been more evident. A year or two ago you could have argued that Japan's patient submission to American bullying over trade was due to its strategic dependence on American protection against a Soviet threat. But now there is no threat and Japanese ministers still protest that they are indeed doing their best to concede to American demands.

Together with the protestations of goodwill at successive summit meetings, this suggests that there was some basis for Kautsky's notion of the coincidence of interest felt by capitalist governments in the avoidance of damaging conflict and the resolution of differences. Yet the competition, with undertones of conflict, remains. So it is not *either* conflict or co-operation but *both* conflict and co-operation.

There are good reasons for thinking, then, that the increase both in the intensity of conflict and the concern for co-operation are structural and permanent. In the responses to a localised crisis, what we have witnessed these past six months are also the signs of a deeper, more lasting secular change in international relations.

The first reason for this has to do with technology – and therefore tends to be overlooked by most economists and political scientists. It is the accelerating rate of technological change, and the escalating costs of these changes. Together, these have had a major effect on the behaviour both of governments and of enterprises. Why this has happened is really only commonsense. As each technological innovation, whether in the form of new products or of new processes, becomes known, it adds to the demand for capital. The new process is more capital-intensive than the old process it replaces and makes obsolete. The new version of an old product – a car, for instance – is more sophisticated and has much more costly research – into computerisation, for example – built into it than the older model it replaces. But the accelerating rate of change in the technology of products and processes has another effect. It means that the capital invested in developing and marketing the product has to be amortised – written off – faster than the last time a new product or process was introduced. For the enterprise, this means that just selling to a local, national market is too slow. The product has to be sold – if necessary, also made – in other national markets. This is the driving force behind the internationalisation of production; and it is inexorable so long as technological change goes faster and faster.

For the state, this means that strate-

gies of building up national champion enterprises on the basis of a privileged position in the national market will no longer work. The narrow market, and the limited possibilities of profit-within-a-given-time that go with it, mean that even with state aid, protected national industries will fall behind foreign competitors; and when they do try to sell on a world market they will find it too late to catch up.

The spreading recognition by governments of this technological imperative is the second reason why there is such hot competition between capitalist states. The more governments came to abandon development strategies based on producing for the national market, turning from import substitution to export promoting policies, the more players joined in the competition for world market shares. Most of them did not change because the IMF told them to, but because it seemed the only possible way to make the economy rich enough to provide revenues for the state and the state wealthy enough to hold society from falling apart. Socialism (or, more accurately, state planning) failed to produce enough wealth and seemed less and less able to make up for economic failures by being more just and equitable. If the state were to survive, no option was left but to join in the world market economy and its competitive game of market shares.

Note that there were three necessary conditions for the playing of this global game and for the entry of all these new players into it. Barriers to the movement of capital had to go, so that investment was not limited by the supply of local savings. And technology had to be mobile too, so that the latest know-how could be accessible, often through alliance with foreign-owned firms, to the newcomers. Finally, the national markets had to be linked together into one global market by cheaper transport and faster, cheaper communication both of information and of ideas.

To the fulfilment of all these necessary conditions the leading capitalist country, the United States, made important contributions. But of course there were some downside risks to the breaking down of barriers between national markets so that capital could move freely, so that multinationals were free to apply their technology where they wanted and so that trade would not be held back by an inadequate infrastructure of transport and communication. The risk was that sweeping the barriers away also swept away the national systems of regulation and control that bitter experience, from the South Sea Bubble on, had shown were necessary to preserve confidence in the system and in the legal, financial and social conditions under which business could prosper and invest in the future.

Here, perhaps, lies the explanation for all the ritual protestations of mutual goodwill, for all the testimonial speeches about the importance of po-

'The Americans found it easy to divide and rule because of European resentment of Japanese penetration of European markets and because of Japanese fears of Fortress Europe after 1992'



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(David Marquand – Professor of Politics and Contemporary History, University of Salford)
The dynamics of European integration and the forces competing to influence its design.

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- 1. 1992 and all that: strategic choices** (Mike Artis – Professor of Economics, University of Manchester; Stephen Woolcock – Senior Research Fellow, Chatham House)
What are the various options for monetary union and what will be their consequences?
- 2. Federal permutations** (David Beetham – Professor of Politics, University of Leeds; Franz Stummann – Director, European Centre for Traditional and Regional Cultures)
What are the political implications of supranational federation for national autonomy, local/regional government and the future of the United Kingdom?
- 3. The frontiers of citizenship** (David Purdy – Department of Economics, University of Manchester; Hilary Wainwright – Charter 88 and The Socialist Society)
How could the European Social Charter and institutions such as the European Court be used to strengthen and expand the range of citizens' rights?
- 4. Racism and Europe's ethnic diasporas** (Trevor Charter – Author of *Shattering Illusions*; Glyn Ford – MEP)
Racism is the savage face of European civilisation. What should be done to reduce mutual hostilities between 'natives' and 'settlers', equalise life chances and uphold cultural pluralism?
- 5. Greening Europe** (Tom Burke – Director, Green Alliance; Fred Steward – Director, Technology Policy Unit, University of Aston)
Can a coordinated Euro-grünpolitik check the growing pollution of our land, sea and air and inaugurate sustainable patterns of production and consumption?

PARALLEL WORKING SESSIONS – AFTERNOON

- 6. Peace dividends: old habits die hard** (Elena Lieven – ex-Vice Chair CND; Hermann Scheer – SDP member of the German Bundestag; Linda Walker – CND Worker)
The end of the Cold War raises high hopes for cuts in military spending. What opportunities are opening up for a fundamentally new vision of world peace?
- 7. Democratic deficits** (David Marquand; Gary Titley, MEP)
The Community's system of government is neither effective nor democratic. There is a backlog of urgent constitutional reform in Britain. How should these deficiencies be made good?
- 8. Europe turned inside out** (Peter Lawrence – Editor, *Review of African Political Economy*; Fred Nixon – Department of Economics, University of Manchester)
What European policies and agencies can best promote democracy in South Africa, development south of the Sahara, regulation of transnational corporations and enlightenment at the IMF?
- 9. Eastern approaches: market lures** (Jon Bloomfield – writer on Eastern Europe; Pat Devine – Department of Economics, University of Manchester)
The USSR and the countries of Eastern Europe face hardship and dislocation as they attempt to move from centralised command planning to more market-based economies.
- 10. Changing Partners: Britain and the New World** (Phil Gummett – Department of Government, University of Manchester; Paul Webster – Foreign Editor, *The Guardian*)
How should Britain, a second rank power and a reluctant European, adjust its foreign policy and self-image in the emergent world order?

FINAL PLENARY: Changes of rule – British politics in a state of transition

(Martin Jacques – Editor, *Marxism Today*)
If Europe's progressive potential is to become a reality, major changes will be required in Britain's system of government, political parties and civil society.

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The fussing over the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations (MTN) these last few months is a good example. The French said from the very begin-ning that the talks were not really necessary and that any substantial agreement on new rules for trade was highly unlikely. Yet they went along with the Americans. The Americans were keen on the MTN mainly because they wanted freer trade in services. All the brouhaha we have heard from Washington about agriculture was just a smokescreen, in my view, for their real interest in liberalised trade in banking and insurance. Just recently, it has also served a propaganda purpose to persuade people that if the talks do fail, it will be because the European Community clings so obstinately to its Common Agricultural Policy. In any case, four years after the Uruguay Round began, very little of real significance has been agreed. Yet hardly one voice has been raised to say, 'no matter'. Everyone seems to agree that the Round ought to have succeeded, even though it is clear that deep disagree-

Whatever happens in the Gulf, it seems that at the turn of the year we still cannot be certain about the future direction of American policies toward the outside world. It would be nice to hope that the shift away from crude

Yet, if both the Europeans and the Japanese want the United States to abandon unilateralism and to make more room in its policy-making processes for the idea of others, both have a common cause. It is in the European interest, for example, to have the Japanese play a larger part in the management of the IMF. It is in the Japanese interest to have European support against American bullying through the Strategic Impediments Initiative. 1991 could be a year when it would pay dividends for the Europeans and Japanese to abandon the derogatory stereotypes they have cherished so long about each other, and combine forces to push the Americans further towards new multi-lateralist ways of managing the world economy and maintaining world order. ●

Susan Strange is the professor of international relations at the European University Institute.

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Marketing The World

The collapse of communism has not been greeted with triumphalism in the West. Rather, there is a mood of uncertainty and foreboding.

Charlie Leadbeater explains why

Capitalism enjoyed a great revival in the 1980s. After the stagflation, crises, oil shocks and recessions of the 1970s, the world economy has enjoyed eight years of sustained growth, with buoyant world trade and a worldwide investment boom. Politically there has been a great turn to the right, led most extravagantly by the new Right in the US and UK but equally apparent in the consolidation of the power of the CDU in Germany and the pragmatism of socialist governments in power in Australia, New Zealand and France. The culmination of the decade in which capitalism was re-energised came in 1989 with the collapse of planning and communism in the face of markets and capitalism. Socialism's 80-year threat to capitalism had been decisively defeated. It was indisputably capitalism's decade.

With this recent track record of success one would have thought the apostles of capitalism would be brimming with confidence. Yet at best there is a mood of uncertainty and doubt, at worst a sense of defensiveness and foreboding. In large part, this foreboding is due to the way the world economy seems to be shuddering into recession. The party of the 1980s is coming to an end. The signs were already there in the UK recession and slower growth in the US, before Iraq invaded Kuwait. But the Gulf conflict and the rise in oil prices has made it increasingly likely there will be a generalised world recession next year.

Fear of recession has been heightened

by the collapse of the Gatt talks on liberalising world trade and the consequent threat of a rising tide of protectionism. A trade war of export subsidies and import quotas could slow growth considerably. However, the significance of the collapse of the Gatt talks goes well beyond a failure to agree on levels of agricultural subsidies.

The failure of the Gatt talks to ensure the course of development of the world market in its moment of apparent triumph, is symptomatic of a deeper worry. It is a failure, especially of the US and the European Community, to take custody of the development of the world market. The advanced capitalist states are only just coming to terms with the character of the new world their success in the 1980s created, and the responsibilities for its development that they have to shoulder. The most striking sign of that success – the wave of revolutions of 1989 which brought down communism in eastern Europe – was a dramatic case of a much more general trend which dominated politics in the last decade: the extension of the reach of the market.

Capitalism's success in the last decade has had three components. First, the geographic extension of the market to more areas of the world, pre-eminently eastern Europe but also into Africa and South America. Second, the growing integration of that market through world trade, seamless international financial markets and cross border investments by multinational companies. Third, the intensification of the market within societies. The market is making

its way deeper into economies through measures such as privatisation (now a worldwide movement stretching from eastern Europe, through the UK to South America) and the opening of national economies, especially in the developing world, to the disciplines of the international market. The collapse of communism in eastern Europe was the rousing finale to a decade, in which the market made headway throughout the world as the dominant institution of economic co-ordination both within economies and between them.

The main question facing market societies now is this: how will the fabric of the world market, which brings them all together, be maintained? Who will take responsibility for mediating conflicts of interest between market economies, in whose interests will the widening world market be created?

But the very spread and intensification of the power of the market is creating its own tensions. It is from this that the uncertainty flows. The events of 1989 challenge capitalism's identity and unity as well as confirming its dominance. Capitalism has been deprived of the great unifying external threat of communism. We are moving from an era where political debate turned on the opposition between capitalism and communism, into an era where it will turn on the differences between market-based societies. Acceptance of the market will no longer be a controversial issue, it will be a shared common interest. However, beyond that essential common ingredient, there will be many varieties of market economy. Flour, eggs and milk are the common ingredients of most cakes. But those common ingredients are the basis for wonderful diversity: chocolate, coffee, fruit cake, carrot cake and so on. In much the same way we will become more aware in the next few years that possession of a market is not the stamp of homogeneity but the source of diversity.

There will be several dimensions along which market societies will differ. They will have different positions in terms of the world market economy: they may be protectionist or open to trade. They will vary in their resources and the character of their industrial bases: developed or developing; rich or poor; industrialised or newly industrialising; commodity producer, manufacturer or service provider. They will have different cultures: the individualist Anglo-Saxon capitalist economies or the more collectivist economies in the Far East. They will be led by different philosophical approaches: the regulated capitalism of christian democracy in continental western Europe or the free market philosophy of the new Right in the UK and eastern Europe. They will differ in the political institutions which accompany the market: liberal democracy or authoritarian regimes. They will be more or less environmentally responsible. There will be economies where the state disavows its role in



Illustration: Pual Bateman

economic development and those where it consciously adopts an active role. These distinctions are not new. But the intensification of the power of the market will widen these differences rather than draw societies together.

The historic triumph of 1989 will not create the grounds for unprecedented solidarity between the triumphant market societies. On the contrary it threatens fragmentation. It is the risk of this fragmentation and tension – mainly economic rather than military – which is feeding the uncertainty and doubt about the future.

For accompanying the general extension of the power of the market in the 1980s have been important shifts in the balance of power within the world economy. The revolutions of 1989 were part of a much wider shift in the balance of economic power within the world economy.

These shifts have been a growing source of friction between market economies. Managing international economic relations between very different kinds of market economy will become the central concern of international politics. The most important shifts in the last decade have taken place within the capitalist world rather than between the capitalist and communist worlds.

It is clear we will need a much more complex map of international relations. The old association of east with communism and west with capitalism will not do. In the last decade the most dynamic forces, which shifted the balance of power within the world economy, were not marchers on the streets of Budapest, Prague and Warsaw but skilled workers in factories in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. The capitalist east is at the heart of the shifting balance of power within the world economy.

The most dynamic part of the capitalist world is in Japan and in its wake Korea, with Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan and Singapore following behind. The competitive threat these economies pose to the traditional European and North American market societies is increasingly not a question of low labour cost production. The Japanese in particular are heading up-market to high quality, innovative, well styled products, with new products coming on to the market with astounding speed. Last year Sony produced 1,500 new products, about five every working day. Toyota is spreading alarm through the world motor industry with its new Lexus luxury car. It costs about \$30,000 less than the equivalent BMW or Mercedes while being technically superior. This is a remarkable achievement to have moved in less than 15 years from sub-compact and family cars into the high-quality, luxury market. The world's consumer electronics industry is being reshaped by the Japanese and the computer industry is about to follow.

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our physical maps of the capitalist world. They also demand a reassessment of the values, cultures and institutions which accompany capitalism. In many of these countries, pre-eminently Korea, the state plays a powerful role in economic development. In Japan a collective culture of sharing responsibility and duty to society, family and company is much more important than the individualism associated with the Western capitalism of America and Britain. The rise of Japan is not just a geographic shift in the balance of power within the world economy, but also a shift in the values associated with dynamic market economies. The individualist American values, which combined with mass production and marketing to lead capitalist growth from the 1930s to the 1970s, is giving ground to a different kind of capitalist culture.

This loss of American dynamism is the other side of the rise of the Pacific Rim economies. The triumph of West over East in 1989 and the Gulf crisis far from confirming US ascendancy have exposed its severe limits. The US economy is heading for recession, while Japan continues to grow strongly. This has been accompanied by a growing crescendo of concern about the weakness of the US manufacturing base in competition with the Far East. Some US auto makers have taken to overtly racist anti-Japanese advertisements along the lines of: 'We build cars for people our size'. Sony's purchase of Columbia Pictures, Matsushita's acquisition of MCA and the way that Japanese property companies have been buying up parts of Manhattan have caused far more outrage about the loss of America's soul than the threat of communism.

The Gulf is a prime example of the military and economic contradictions in the US world role as the great protector of capitalism. New global security arrangements in the wake of the end of the cold war not only need to match strategic military and defence considerations, they also need to tally with the reality of economic power. That reality is that America can no longer fulfil the role it has assumed.

The Gulf war is unfolding against a backdrop of domestic economic crisis in the US. The 1991 federal government deficit could exceed \$300 billion. The US still has strategic interests stretching from the Pacific to continental Europe, yet its share of world GNP has fallen by a half since the early-1950s. Germany and Japan are stable democracies with highly prosperous economies but neither aspires to such a military role. Establishing a stable relationship between the economically powerful but militarily unambitious states such as Japan and Germany and the economically weakening but militarily strong states such as the US, will be the heart of the new post-cold war order, not the rapprochement between capitalist and former communist states.

Alongside changes in the balance of

power between Japan and the US is the changing character and world role of Europe. The economic reconstitution of Europe has profound implications for the reshaping of relations between some of the most powerful capitalist economies. The economic integration of the single market programme, economic and monetary union and beyond that the embrace of the eastern European states into the EC is an ambitious attempt to rework the foundations for growth in Europe.

The integration of the European economies is a direct response to the power of Japanese and to a lesser extent US companies. The aim is not so much to create a European market but to create European industries, with a solid enough base to compete with Ford and Toyota, General Electric and Mitsubishi, IBM and Hitachi.

Economic integration is forcing relations between the market economies of Europe to be remade. It has highlighted the differences between the varieties of capitalism which inhabit Europe – principally the clash between the relatively corporatist approach in Germany, the free market rhetoric of the UK and French protectionism and state capitalism. A burning issue of the next decade will be the terms on which these quite different kinds of capitalism are brought together.

As Europe becomes more integrated, so its role within the world economy will become more significant. The row over the Gatt talks – first within the EC to agree a common position, and then with the US at the talks in Brussels – shows how disruptive the EC could be within the world economy. Europe's integration in the direction of a regional power might provide a model which will be followed in other areas of the world, for instance in the growing integration of the Mexican and Canadian economies with the US, or in moves to create closer links between the Asian economies of the Far East. We could be moving towards a situation where the world divides into more or less hostile, supranational trading blocs of nations. It is still unclear whether economic and monetary union is designed to create a fortress Europe, relatively impregnable to outsiders, or an open Europe which will play a full role in developing an open world market. In the past the individual actions of Britain or Germany might have had some limited bearing on the issue. Now Europe is the key.

The extension of the market in the last decade, the shifting balance of power within the world economy and the clashes between market societies with different cultures and strategies, raises the question of how this world market will be maintained and managed. What sort of institutions will be required to reconcile economies with very different interests?

The lack of effective international institutions to cope with more extensive, more complicated relations is one

of the main causes of uncertainty. The institutions of the cold war, built on military alliances East and West will no longer suffice. In future very different institutions will be needed to provide stability.

They will have to be truly international in their scope, unlike the institutions of the cold war, which like Nato were focused on Europe. They will need to be capable of handling relations between far flung states with a diversity of interests. And the new institutions will need to be much more economic than military or defence-oriented.

The collapse of the Gatt talks is a sign of how difficult it is to manage relations between market societies. One problem was the breadth of the issues on the agenda, which ranged from banking and insurance to textiles, patents, farming and semiconductors. Another was the number of countries involved – 107. But one of the main difficulties was the ECs unwillingness to cut subsidies to its farmers by more than 30% over the next 10 years. There are 10m farmers in the EC contributing just 3% of its output. For their sake, prices in world agricultural markets will be artificially reduced, incomes in developing states will be held back and there will be enormous waste within Europe.

World trade is the most all-embracing example of the type of issues which will become increasingly significant with the end of the cold war and the consolidation of the world market. But there are several others.

As international companies grow to take advantage of the spread of world markets, so they want to invest abroad to manufacture products in the markets where they are sold. This is already raising a range of issues: almost every industrialist complains that it is virtually impossible to find a way into the German and Japanese markets; the UK government is hostile to takeover bids from French state owned companies; there is growing concern in the US about the scale of Japanese acquisitions. Cross-border investments are becoming increasingly politically controversial. There is no international regulatory body capable of matching the power of large international companies, which may seek to monopolise parts of global markets.

Financial markets have extended their reach and become more integrated in the last decade, creating a 24-hour round the clock trading system, stretching from Tokyo, to New York and London. There is only national regulation of these financial markets even though their gyrations (October 1987) can have tremendously powerful effects on the state of the world economy. In general, financial flows are becoming as important as the flow of goods in the world economy. All these issues – the way international flows of trade, investment, and finance are handled – will have a bearing on the legitimacy of the world market. But the most important

'The economies which are showing the poorest health, the UK and the US, are the ones where the new Right has had the greatest influence'



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issue is how market societies will co-operate to deal with environmental despoliation. As yet progress here has been painfully slow for it demands an unprecedented level of political co-operation.

The task of creating institutions to foster co-operation and shared responsibilities between competing economies was easier to contemplate when the world economy was growing in the early 1980s. But with growth faltering in the US, the UK, Australia, France and many other European economies, the shine has been taken off capitalism's triumph. Slower growth in itself is encouraging states to turn inward, to protect themselves. It will promote sectional, self-interest. The stronger economies will be less willing to bear their responsibilities to the weaker. Most significantly, Germany is transfixed with the excitement and the costs of reunification, while Japan, lender of last resort to the world economy, has cut sharply the outflow of investment funds to the rest of the world.

Slower growth is likely to accentuate the differences between economies. What is particularly interesting is that the economies which are showing the poorest health, the UK and the US, are the ones where the new Right has had the greatest influence. It is in Germany and Japan, where capitalism has always been relatively corporatist and regulated, with the state playing an important role, that growth is most robust.

Domestic politics cannot be separated from these shifts in the balance of power in the world economy. One vital ingredient in Thatcherism's demise was its inability to cope, politically or economically, with the shifts in the world economy, some of which it championed fiercely in the early 1980s.

Her departure represents an admission that radical, neo-liberal remedies have failed to do the trick in transforming the British economy. It is also an admission that economic nationalism has had its day, in the UK at least. Her resistance to the ideas of a European economic superpower created to compete with Japan and the US was one of the main causes of her downfall. Mrs Thatcher's resignation marks the end of an experiment to regenerate the economy through extreme Anglo-Saxon capitalism. It has suffered defeat not at the hands of socialism but at the hands of alternative, more successful forms of capitalism in Germany and Japan.

The end of Thatcherism should set in train a slow adjustment to reality: while the new Right may have led the ideological resurgence of capitalism in the last decade, the economic resurgence has been led by Germany and Japan. This in turn will force further changes in the agenda of British politics to learn from more successful economies. If there is a common theme to their success, it is that good market economies have to be able to overcome the inhe-

rent weaknesses of the market. In particular they must be good at making sure long term needs are taken care of, even though the market often forces short term issues to the fore. Thus the successful market economies treat labour like an asset which should be invested in rather than a commodity to be traded; they have settled relationships between their financial and industrial sectors to promote long-term investment; they enjoy low inflation, cheap investment finance and macro-economic stability; the state does not overstate nor disavow its role within the economy. Societies which are able to plan for the long term on these issues are as a result likely to be able to respond much more effectively to other long term issues such as environmental despoliation and reducing defence activities.

The market economies, fresh from the decade of their triumph, have good reason to pause. They have been deprived of the familiar enemy against which they united in the past. They are on the verge of a recession. It is not clear who will take responsibility for maintaining the fabric of a world economy which embraces quite different forms of capitalism. The spread of the market is creating pressures for self-interest and fragmentation, which are much more powerful than the countervailing forces in favour of solidarity and co-operation. Capitalism's cold war with communism is over. It now seems to be preparing for war with itself. ●

'The institutions of the cold war, built on military alliances East and West, will no longer suffice'



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Reflections After Thatcher

The end of the Thatcher era is an opportunity for political and cultural reassessment. **Bhikhu Parekh** introduces our series of reflections on the last 11 years

The premiership of Margaret Thatcher lasted for 11 long years, during half of which she enjoyed rare personal ascendancy. She became so central a feature of British political life and so mesmerised the country that hardly anyone managed to remain emotionally neutral about her. One had therefore feared that her departure would cause deep psychological disorientation, a big hole at the centre of national self-consciousness, an unbearable silence in a politically-addicted nation.

She has now been gone for some weeks and is hardly missed. How is this possible? Dominant leaders do not spring from nowhere, nor do they function in a vacuum. They are produced, sustained and allowed to become dominant by the prevailing cultural climate and institutional structures and their ascendancy gives us rare insights into the latter.

I am not here concerned with assessing Thatcher's achievements, which were many. I am concerned instead with the deep questions of social and political morality and the health of British democracy. Rather than judge the Thatcherite years, we might more profitably use them as a tool of much-needed national self-understanding.

Margaret Thatcher highlighted and exposed some of the profound limitations of British democracy and society. She dominated the cabinet by fair and foul means and reduced it to a mere

sounding board. By concentrating power in her private office and using it to keep a close watch on and occasionally terrorising her ministers, she acquired the power and authority of a headmistress controlling a bunch of raw and nervous junior assistants.

She also reduced her parliamentary party's influence on decision-making, and manipulated it into endorsing policies about most of which they knew little or were deeply uneasy. Indeed, parliament itself ceased to matter much. A large chunk of the national press, most of it Tory anyway or only too happy to oblige those in power, ceased acting as the national watchdog and virtually became part of the government's public relations exercise.

One would have thought that a plural and decentralised society with multiple centres of power within and outside the political system would have put up some resistance. The ease with which most of them caved in was startling. The BBC, the trade unions, the local authorities, the CBI, the churches, the universities, were disempowered and rendered silent.

How each institution was pressurised, trapped, cornered and tricked into making mistakes and misjudging its power and range of choices will repay close study. Not all the blame lies at the door of Margaret Thatcher. Most of the institutions had already become hollow and without a sense of pur-

pose. They were sometimes led by careerists, ready to oblige if the price were right, and had forfeited a good deal of their moral authority. Rather than build them up in the larger interest of British society and democracy, the Thatcher government exploited their vulnerability to the full.

Margaret Thatcher could not consolidate her domination without the help of mini-Thatchers in major institutions. She and her colleagues made sure that only those were appointed at their helm who were sympathetic not just to her ideas but also to her style of management and with whom they could 'do business'. In other cases, the institutions involved felt that they could not survive in a Thatcherite climate without electing or appointing such men and women to run their affairs.

Since the 'iron lady' was inimitable, the mini-Thatchers became fake and extravagant versions of the original, playing comically with idioms and modes of behaviour that did not come easily to them. Wherever one went, one heard only one language spoken in only one accent. A country known for its eccentricity and variety became suffocating.

An anglophile diplomat from a poor country, who had known Britain since the early-70s, confided that whenever he went to visit a university, its administrators lobbied him for students, scholarships, endowments and exchanges of staff at his



government's expense. He wondered why Britain had 'suddenly' become a nation of hucksters and high-pressure salespeople.

As for British society at large, we have learned mixed lessons from the Thatcher

The Thatcher years have shown how fragile British democracy is and how easily it can be hijacked. They have shown how easily the English can privatise their souls and replace the 'nanny state' with a tutorial state. They have shown too how shallow are the roots of social compassion, mutual respect, public dignity, tolerance and even good manners. Anyone who cares for the moral and political well-being of what still remains a basically kind, gentle and cultured society ought to feel disturbed. ●

corruption did set in and is visible in many areas of life. The 4m unemployed provoked no major national protest. The horrifying stories of homelessness and young people sleeping in cardboard boxes received only limited



Fay Weldon, writer, looks back on a period of anger and paralysis.

What has been momentous is the fact that nothing has happened. People have been too eaten up with anger to let anything happen. Outrage is a stimulant of sorts but I hope to see a flowering of the arts now that it is over. Perhaps we have been seeing that already in the last year or so. There has been a change that pre-dated Thatcher's departure, a much more open-minded mood. There has been a vacuum into which ideas are beginning to flow again so I'm feeling more cheerful. But it will be a long time before the young people who have grown up in this period will be able to believe that there is any other motive for human behaviour than self-interest. This is ingrained into a miserable, depressed generation. It will take a long time to cheer them up.●

Rabbi **Julia Neuberger**, a visiting fellow at the King's Fund Institute, surveys the damage.

Although it has become commonplace to talk of the Thatcher revolution, Margaret Thatcher was, to some extent, the expression of a change rather than its cause. There has been a shift in emphasis, and accountants have never been so important, but people, particularly public spenders, have had to be accountable for what they do. That will be a lasting legacy. Less permanent, and already diminishing, is the 'get-rich-quick, high-spending, let-the-wealth-trickle-down-to-the-poor' school of thought. But there will be lasting damage to the least advantaged in our society, because cuts in social and support services, particularly from voluntary organisations funded by national and local government, cannot be replaced by the charitable sector.●



Mark Fisher, shadow minister for the arts, sees more of the same until the next election.

The cultural legacy of Margaret Thatcher's 11 years in power is a nasty little cocktail of neglect, underfunding and censorship. In the media, her maxim has been: 'If you don't like it, ban it'. Hence the pressure on *Real Lives* and *Death On The Rock*, the injunctions over *My Country Right Or Wrong* and *Spycatcher*, the confusion of the Zircon tapes, the Sinn Fein ban and Section 28.

In the arts, the 80s have seen the regional and national theatre sliding into deficits totalling 16m, and the RSC being forced to abandon its London programme at the Barbican. There are physical holes in the roofs of our major museums. It has all reflected the extent of her own personal interests. She re-reads Frederick Forsyth and her idea of a real cultural achievement would be a British victory in the European Song Contest. Like all bad fairies, she leaves two party gifts, the poll tax, which will ensure that local authorities arts expenditure will have to be cut back, and her cultural clone, John Major. Together, they will make sure that the nasty taste of this cultural cocktail will linger on until the general election.●

Carmen Callil, managing director of Chatto & Windus publishers, reflects on a national blight.

She caused a feeling of despair, a lack of hope among 80% of the population. Her vision of life was poisonous as if she tainted the air we breathe. There was a sort of magic about her, something pagan. She has condemned all powerful women to a miserable future for at least the next 15 years. But I think she suffered a lot from sexism herself. People, especially men, were terrified of her in a way that they wouldn't have been if she were a man. They gave her extra power because they thought she was stronger than she really was because of her sex. It's their own fault.●

Angela McRobbie on a revolution in the family

Diverse Solutions

The cultural revolution which has taken place during the Thatcher years has been led by women. Men have been trailing behind, sometimes gaining from the fruits of female determination and reluctantly falling into rank. More often they have been losing some of their advantages and resenting the speed and scale of the transformations which have so affected their expectations about 'private life'.

This quiet, private revolution has transformed the way we live. From the late-70s, it has been in our family lives and the relations between men and women that the most sweeping changes in British society have occurred. Despite Margaret Thatcher's desire for a return to family values, a theme which was so patently unenforceable and unrealistic that it eventually became a lament, these changes have been of such magnitude that the family will never be the same again.

It is the breakdown of the traditional family form and its replacement by a diversity of domestic living strategies which is most apparent and which has given the policy-makers and the politicians the greatest cause for concern. During the Thatcher years, heterosexual women have gained sufficient self-confidence and self-esteem to refuse to remain in an unhappy or violent marriage. No longer do they need the status of marriage or the existence of a husband to feel valued.

In the majority of cases it is now women who initiate divorce proceedings. It is they who decide to call it a day. For all but the poor and the unemployed, this means a dramatic drop in standards of living, but it is a price that women are willing to pay. Indeed, if one research study carried out in the mid-1980s is anything to go by, newly-divorced women, despite being worse off, *feel* much better off and are able to exercise more control over what money they have and therefore make it go further.

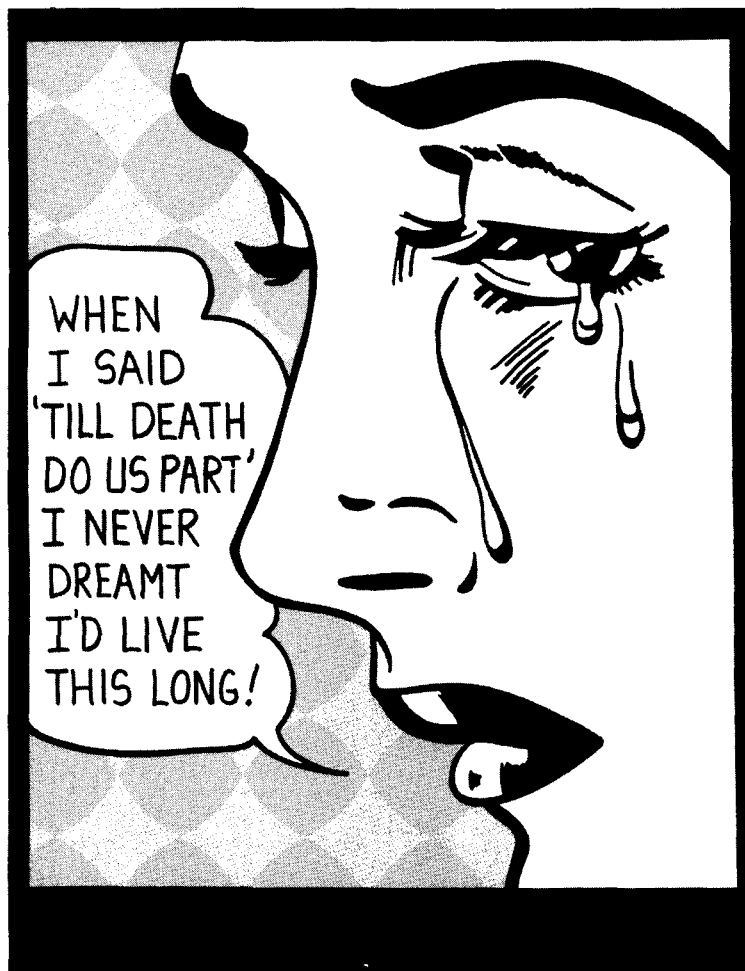
For middle-class women there is often the move

downmarket to less desirable parts of town, and the genteel gentrification this brings to neighbourhoods which for some reason were overlooked by the speculators and developers of the mid-1980s. The single-parent family 'trapped' on the council estate is not quite as negative a stereotype as it often seems. Precisely as a response to the prevalence of this new way of living, a greater degree of co-operation and support has grown up in many of these estates. This is mostly comprised of shared childcare and informal child-minding to allow single mothers to work for a few hours a day 'off the cards'.

Alongside this is the flooding into higher education of mature women, including single parents of all social backgrounds, who through the access courses established in the polytechnic sector have been able to study for a degree. These students are keen and conscientious, with an eye on the labour market, where they know their wage-earning capacity will be greatly enhanced as a result of their degree status. There is no other so socially mixed area of education as this.

What has happened to the husbands of these women, or in the case of the unmarried 'teenage mothers', the fathers of their children? Middle-class men tend to re-marry quickly and start a second family. Their ex-wives are slower to take the plunge again, and instead will spend time on improving their job qualifications and looking after the children.

Middle-class remarriage has contributed to recent debates about feckless fathers. It is not only working-class or unemployed men who evade their financial responsibilities. The problem is, however, that where a new family has been established, the first family, almost inevitably, will take second place financially. There will be a drop in the standard of living even when an equitable arrangement is arrived at. This alone changes the nature of the long-term expectations



of family life.

The male partners of teenage mothers, 10 years on, are still playing shadowy roles. A study carried out a few years ago on the Peckham estate in south London suggested that such men, often long-term unemployed, drift from one relationship to the next, returning home to their parents when things go wrong, and then moving in temporarily with a new girlfriend, before finding themselves homeless again. The brutal fact is that, rejected or marginalised by the labour market, these men are of no economic value to women.

All the studies have shown that among the lowest reaches of the class hierarchy, many young women will become pregnant outside marriage and remain at home with their parents until they eventually find their own accommodation. Maternal poverty is the cost of this choice, but once again, young

women appear to prefer single to married poverty. That way they remain more in control.

As yet it is unknown what effect these new forms of living will have on children growing up today. Presumably it depends on the quality of relationships between parents and children, and the emotional stability which prevails, rather than on the actual shape which new forms of living take.

This is a revolution which has occurred in spite of Margaret Thatcher. Indeed, it left her – and the opposition – bewildered and confused, uncertain as to how to respond. The trauma of the end of the family is more likely to affect the politicians (who are not immune to the changes themselves) and the policy-makers worried about the increasing cost of such changes, rather than the children and young people for whom they have already become the norm.●



Andrew Neil, editor of the *Sunday Times*, looks back on a revolution in print.

The revolution in newspaper publishing is perhaps one of the great success stories of the Thatcher years. In 1979, British trade unionism was the worst in the democratic world in its failure to defend the wages and conditions of its members and reluctance to allow the government of the day to rule the country. There is no finer example of the trade-union revolution than Wapping. There may have been problems with the way it was carried out after it became clear that negotiating the introduction of new working methods wasn't going to work, but few people even on the Left would want to re-fight the Wapping battle.

The subsequent introduction of 21st-century technology, the increase in titles, the dynamism and improved quality of the product among the quality newspapers is a microcosm of the positive aspects of the cultural revolution of Thatcherism. Jaguar, British Steel and British Airways might all be more profitable, but newspapers are the best all-round example of the progressive culture of the Thatcher years.●

Colin McCabe, head of production at the British Film Institute, checks the uneven balance of the Thatcher years.

Thatcher's greatest achievement was to call the Unionists' bluff and insist both that the future of Northern Ireland was dependent upon majority wish and that the republic had a legitimate interest in the North's affairs. She was the first British politician to face down the Unionist threat.

For the rest, the balance is almost entirely negative. She accelerated rather than halted our industrial decline, she accentuated the production of a disaffected underclass, she made bad universities and schools worse, she coarsened public life. But in all this she merely went with the grain rather than against it. In the end, I am not sure that she counted for all that much. She was, above all, the product of the weakness of the Labour Party.●



Ursula Owen, publishing director of Virago Press, looks beneath the glitter.

Thatcher's effect on the culture has been much as her effect on everything – a certain amount of glitter on top covering layers of neglect and a good deal of silencing of the less fashionable voices. A lot of things have been going on in the arts, but many of them have been in spite of Thatcher's policies. Some would say we've learnt things from her: how to respect bottom lines, operate within our incomes, not waste money. And I suppose the Left has learnt lessons from the 70s; about being professional, about having to make things work financially to survive. But a lot of people knew these things, and we've always given her more credit for teaching us this than she deserves.

She's encouraged conglomeration, obsession with the bottom line, a certain kind of elitism and a belief in sponsorship which can't be sustained as a serious way of funding the arts. She's centralised power in culture as well as in everything else, and the problem is that this narrows down the imagination. If you don't have culture coming from the roots of communities, you stop risk-taking, you make a boring consensus culture.

It's fashionable to sneer at the idea of culture coming out of the communities, it conjures up dreary, second-rate arts endeavours. But there are countless examples of highly imaginative things coming out of local beginnings.

It will take years to recover from the lack of interest in proper planning for cities and of funding for the theatre. But, providing the right things are done to support and fund the innovative and imaginative ideas, though it will take time to recover, I don't believe she's done permanent damage.●

REFLECTIONS

Owen Kelly looks for the shape of a cultural democracy

Value For Money



Is this 'art' I see before me?

The Thatcher years have not been good for the funded 'arts'. Many Arts Council clients have been jettisoned or 'devolved' to an uncertain future at the hands of regional arts associations. Regional arts associations are themselves being wound up, to be replaced with more tightly controlled 'arts boards'. Long-standing theatre companies such as 7:84 have closed. Theatres like the Albany Empire have been forced to go dark. The RSC is leaving London and retrenching to Stratford.

Meanwhile, the Left is pulling out its cultural conservatism and putting it on again like an old familiar sweater. 'Public subsidy for proper artists!' it is shouting, 'there's nothing elitist about the theatre - it's an inherently socialist process'. The Left has generally contented itself with simply defending whatever is currently having its state funding withdrawn. When it has gone on the attack, it has merely asked for more of the same - more 'artists', more 'art', more grants - as though there was nothing political about culture, as

though 'art' was not itself a political construction.

This conservatism works at all levels. We can see it in the steadfast refusal of the Labour Party, until very recently, even to countenance creating a Ministry Of Culture with responsibility for the 'arts' and broadcasting, and the ability to develop coherent and progressive cultural policies. We can see it in the absence of any debate about the nature of culture and the relationships between ideas, beliefs and social action.

Of course there have been exceptions to this. The GLC, under Ken Livingstone, did move to establish a coherent cultural policy. It did not seek to replicate the work of the Arts Council, nor to provide a 'progressive' equivalent. Instead, it aimed at establishing different criteria as to what constituted cultural activity suitable for funding, and different ways of funding it.

To understand why such an approach was necessary, we need only look at why the Arts Council was launched in the first place. It developed in

1945 out of the Council for Education in Music and the Arts (Cema), a group that was formed during the war. Cema's members were drawn from the worlds of classical music, the 'legitimate' theatre and the fine arts. There was also a similar organisation Entertainments National Service Administration (Ensa), whose members were drawn from music hall, variety and popular music.

Cema was given official status when the war ended, and incorporated as the Arts Council of Great Britain. Ensa, on the other hand, was simply disbanded and its members sent back to the music halls and variety halls, which then proceeded to close down in the face of changing leisure patterns and competition from television.

The establishment of Cema, and then the Arts Council, was an example of the 'inter-recruitment, cross-posting and the exchange of both ideology and experience' which EP Thompson has characterised as typifying imperialism. Cema's aim was to provide 'refreshment for the multitude of war workers'. It was founded by a small group of powerful men. The pleasures of this highly particular group were taken as the self-evident measure of the civilised man or woman.

The opinions of one powerful section of society were thus sanctified as the 'Great Tradition'. This is presented as being the natural outcome of some process of social Darwinism. It would be truer to say that it is a Eurocentric, gender and class-specific construction, which is inherently reactionary and probably unreformable.

The failure of the Left to acknowledge this has been disastrous. The Arts Council and its satellite bodies fund 'artists' to produce 'art' to the detriment of all those whose cultural pleasures fall outside its definition of the 'Great Tradition'. At the root of this policy is a belief that some 'art', the art of the dominant political culture, is objectively good and that people need to be educated into seeing that this is so. The Left's cultural arguments ig-

nore this central point of cultural oppression. They argue, when they argue at all, that the 'art' is not reaching the right people in the right quantities.

Culture is concerned with creating and sharing meanings. If the Left is serious about democracy it must fight to democratise the means of making meanings. It must begin by recognising that the present funding structure for the 'arts', which categorises some cultural activities as 'art' and devalues the rest, is a political project established for political purposes. The 'Great Tradition' of male Eurocentric art operates to the detriment of women, black people, the working class, and other marginalised groups, whose cultural pleasures are diminished and colonised by being forced into an annexe of the 'Great Tradition'.

The Left needs to abandon reactionary notions of 'art' and develop the idea of a cultural democracy which can operate alongside political and economic democracy. Cultural democracy proceeds from the idea that each social group derives meaning and identity from its cultural activities, which can only be understood, valued and ranked from within the meanings and values of that group.

A raga is not a symphony: it does not operate within the same musical rules, and it does have the same social function. It cannot be subject to the same 'assessment criteria'. A dub poet cannot be judged 'better' or 'worse' than Kingsley Amis, any more than an orange can be judged better or worse than a carrot. The 'Great Tradition' which implies that these comparisons can be made has lingered on, unnoticed by the Left perhaps, but nonetheless shaping the culture in which it operates.

The dismantling of Thatcherism offers us an opportunity to create a new agenda, which can help plan and shape the increasingly interlocked and electronic future. This agenda must begin with the concepts of cultural democracy. ●

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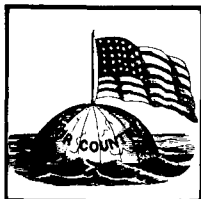
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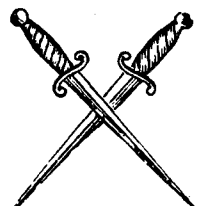
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41 The Chancellor resigns. Go back to 36.	42 	43 'We have become a grandmother' causing constitutional confusion. Buckingham Palace and Charter 88 demand an explanation. Miss a turn.	44 One of your back-benchers secures the release of hostages and returns from the Gulf. Mild irritation. Miss a turn.	45 Keep Jacques Delors waiting at Brussels Central Station. Miss a turn.
40 You are invited back on to the <i>Jimmy Young Show</i> . Have another turn.	39 Community Chest: poll tax demonstrations in Trafalgar Square. Go back four.	38 National angst attack. Go back four.	37 Your Chancellor is 'unassailable'. Advance to 41.	36 
21 The Good Samaritan dribbles and drools about 'caring' but has no money to pay for bandages. Go back to 14.	22 Chance: you publish minutes of a meeting that never took place. Colleagues remain conveniently silent. Have another turn but watch out later.	23 Michael Heseltine storms out of Cabinet and resigns over Westland. Miss a turn.	24 Decide to sell-off water- works and other utilities. Four million people apple for TSB shares. Forward two.	25 <i>Spycatcher</i> smuggled into Britain in great quantities. Back one.
20 	19 Miners start year-long strike. You refuse to turn back. Forward one.	18 The twin is found in the desert. Despair. Go back two.	17 Meet a Good Samaritan who might heal your wounds. Forward four squares.	16 Endure a bruising session on a <i>Nationwide</i> phone-in with a bullish Sue Lawley. Miss two turns.
1 GO! You are an outsider. Not a member of The Club. Throw a six to start.	2 Voice training leads to dramatic drop in pitch, approximating sincerity. Forward three.	3 	4 You are found to be hoarding groceries in your pantry. Go back to GO!	5 Brezhnev dubs you 'The Iron Lady'. Have another turn.

REFLECTIONS

	54 Trip on the steps of the British Embassy in Paris as you rush to declare that you will stand for the second round of the leadership ballot. Go back to 47.	53 A week-end away from it all in Paris with Douglas Hurd. Have another turn.	52 Photo-opportunity: Michael Heseltine feeds the ducks in Regents Park. Miss a turn.	51 Channel Tunnel meets in the middle connecting Britain and France. Go back to 45.
Geoffrey Howe misses Brussels train. It's all your fault. Miss two turns.	47 	48 Geoffrey Howe resigns as foreign secretary. Go back to 47.	49 Cecil Parkinson swears eternal fidelity. Miss a turn.	50 Geoffrey Howe tells tales in the House. Go back to 47.
5 You want to go on and on and on. Forward three.	34 Claim credit for the fall of the Berlin Wall. Forward two.	33 Sir Anthony Meyer stands against you in leadership contest. You can't move for laughing. Miss a turn.	32 Photo-opportunity: Gorbachev shows you round his red square. Forward three.	31 Your hairdresser advises you not to endanger the ozone layer. You wake up with a Green rinse. Forward two.
5 Photo-opportunity: stagger around with a calf in your arms. Miss a turn.	27 	28 President Mitterrand says you have a mouth like Marilyn Monroe. Denis explains to you who she was, confirming suspicions that the frogs are indeed quite mad. Have another turn.	29 Black Friday. Stockmarket collapses. Go back to 14.	30 Gorbys and Ronnie have a surprise party in Reykjavik. You and Nancy are not invited. Miss a turn.
5 Taskforce liberates the Falklands. 'Rejoice' and move forward three.	14 GOTCHA!	13 You've lost the thread of your Frederick Forsyth novel. Go back to GO!	12 Lord Carrington resigns as foreign secretary. You refuse to budge. Miss a turn.	11 Argentina invades the Falklands. Go back three.
6 Michael Foot becomes leader of the Labour Party. March on three.	7 The term 'Thatcherism' is coined by an obscure left-wing magazine. Forward five.	8 Unemployment reaches three million. Miss a turn.	9 Arthur Scargill elected NUM president for life. Throw a party and have another turn.	10 One of the twins is lost in the desert. Despair. Miss a turn.

REFLECTIONS

Andrea Stuart resolves to give up on giving up in 1991

Original Sins

Whatever happened to vice? You remember vice? Sin. Bad habits. That sort of thing. I'll tell you what happened to it: we gave it up, that's what happened. It all started in the 80s. And by the end of the decade most of us had cut down (or out) at least one of the following: smoking, drinking, drugs.

In addition, we have endeavoured to eliminate caffeine, control our intake of preservatives, and regulate our consumption of meat. We are discouraged from having sex, or even sitting in the sun any more. By the time the low-fat, high-virtue 1990s rolled around: 'Nothing for me, I've given up', had become enshrined as the battle whimper of a generation.

In America, where 'giving up' has become its own *raison d'être*, they already have a term for it, pleasure anorexia. In some Mid-Western states there is talk of prohibition. In LA the old style 'party people' have turned into born-again abstainers who meet at mineral water bars to shoot the breeze before their AA meetings or yet another early night.

Those who have been out of LA for a while are helpfully told that the most reliable way to meet a new partner or catch up with old acquaintances is at morning meetings of Cocaine Anonymous. Giving up is no longer a life enhancer, it has become a lifestyle.

And things aren't much better here. Sitting at a dinner party recently, I realised sadly that there wasn't a single person who hadn't 'given something up' in the past year. I am no exception. I now find it easier when ordering in restaurants to eliminate what I *don't* eat, instead of choosing what I do. These days when I encounter lone smokers at parties, or people who sneak off to the loo to do a line of coke, I feel the sort of indulgent nostalgia that previously I reserved for those old hippies who travel to Stonehenge each year to celebrate the summer solstice.

Nothing sums up the new morality quite like people's new year's resolutions. Ask

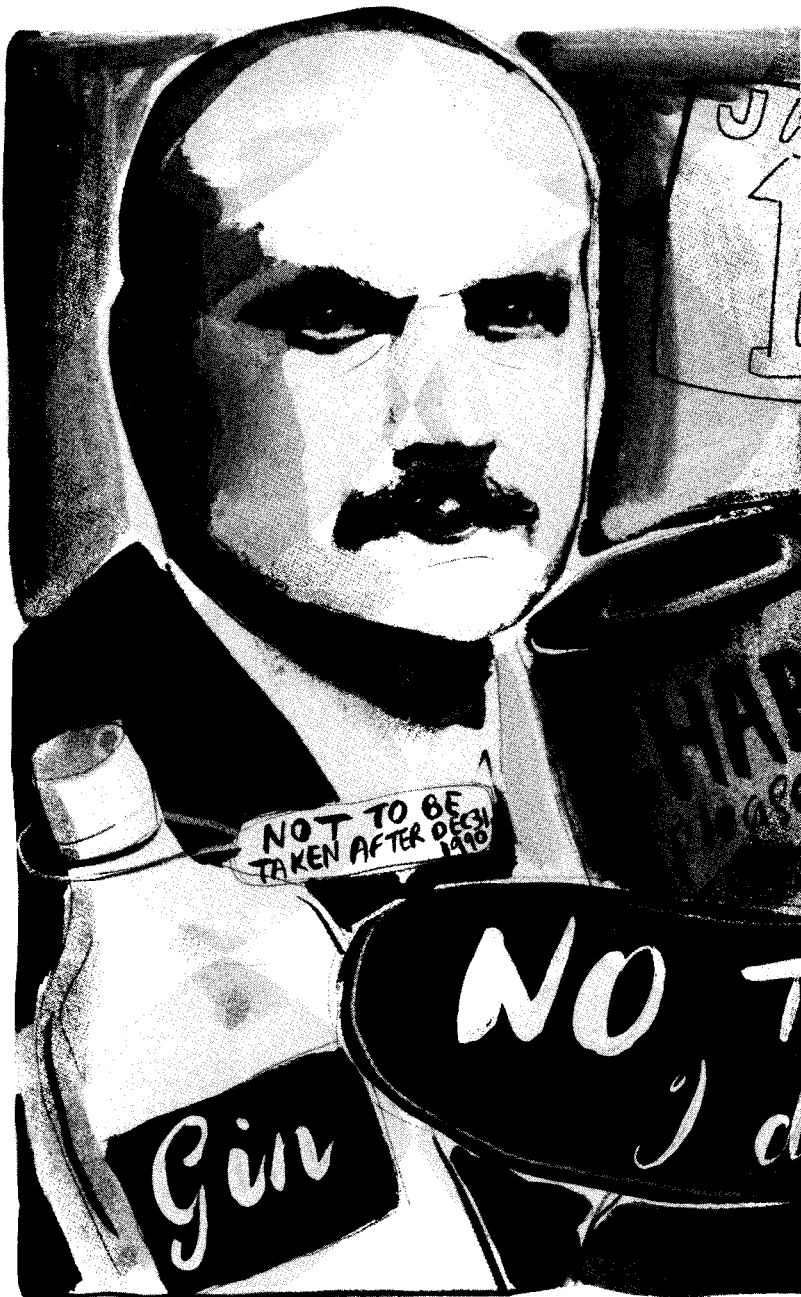
yourself, how many things have you committed yourself to giving up? How much emphasis have you put on the things you'd like to take up? If an informal poll of my acquaintances is anything to go by, your answer is likely to be heavy on the deprivation, low on the action. With one exception. Almost all of us will be determined to take up or do more about our health; like doing more exercise. And that exception will prove the rule. Because we will take up health with the grim determination and self-congratulatory zeal that has characterised our decision to give up everything else.

Now before you get up in arms, I am not saying that it isn't perfectly acceptable – even laudable – to have given up cigarettes, or drugs, or meat. I don't object to giving things up *per se*. Many of the things that we have jettisoned are certainly no great loss. Indeed it may have improved the quality of our lives quite substantially.

But what happens in a world in which morality is defined not by what you do, but by what you don't do? The answer is: not a lot. Despite the virtuous frisson associated with our various abstinences, I suspect that no more of us are positively committing our time, effort or energy to political, charitable or educational concerns. Despite the caring sharing rhetoric of the 'nice 90s', there is no indication that we are one jot more involved in improving the collective lot.

In fact our commitment seems to have actually deteriorated. In 1974, one in four Americans gave their time to 'civic political concerns', now it's only one in five. In Britain, a recent poll found that one-third of the population did not feel that they had a duty to give what they could to charity. In fact, one year into the kinder decade, donations are actually down.

In 1987, 80% of those polled said they had given money within the previous month, this year's figure for the same month was 71%. So concerned are charity organisations about declining levels



of support that a number of them have allegedly met to discuss a joint advertising campaign that stresses the importance of giving.

Whether or not you belong to the 90% of the population who still believe that the government and not charities is responsible for those in need, is beside the point. The Thatcherite revolution was supposed to produce a new breed of person, who felt personally responsible for doing good works, to replace the idea of a responsible state. And what the figures suggest is that this simply hasn't happened. In-

stead, the privatising of our social world has produced a narcissistic philosophy focused on caring for the self and one's own condition.

When this ethos of self-denial is transferred into a larger arena, what emerges is a social policy that focuses on denial and proscription. Banning, cautioning and prohibiting have become the governmental equivalents of 'giving up' in the personal sphere. In the States, Nancy Reagan took care of the drug menace by cautioning the public to 'Just say no'. In Britain we countered the complexity of the Aids dilem-

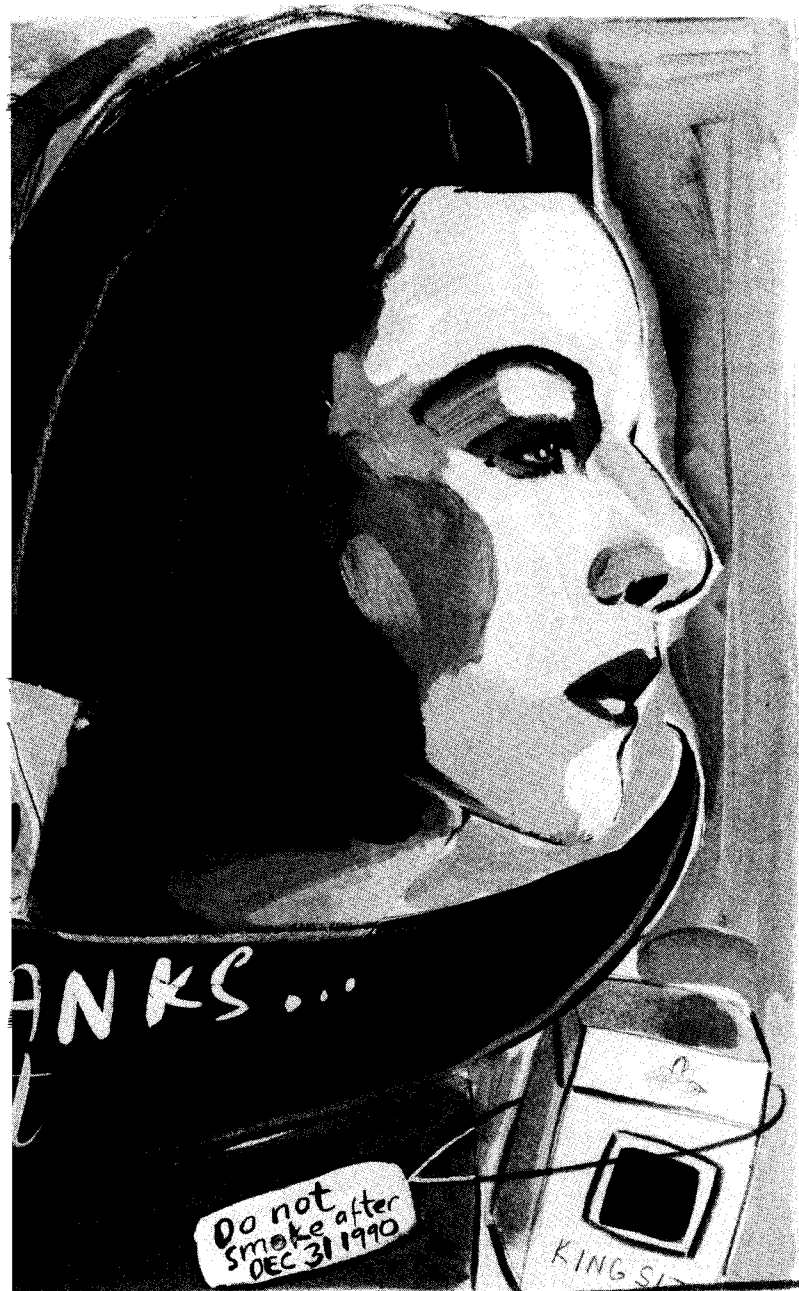


Illustration: Beverly Levy

ma with a series of advertisements starring a chisel and a glacier.

The equation of sensual deprivation with virtue is as old as the hair shirt. Renunciation can provide an instant DIY moral transformation that allows us to feel good about ourselves while doing the absolute minimum for humanity. Governments realise that it is a lot cheaper to spend money on tv commercials telling people not to consume drugs and not to fuck, than it is to enable, support or provide an adequate infrastructure to deal with the Aids epidemic. These

gestures are the ultimate low-cost, high-yield PR campaign: maximum visibility, minimum commitment.

In this mood of virtuous self-denial, the only indulgence we still allow ourselves is the one that isn't based on sensual pleasure at all, technology. Some of the most aesthetically streamlined individuals I know – people who before 'the scare' were committed Perrier imbibers but are now devotees of the still Malvern water (those bubbles were a bit too racy anyway) – feel it is ok to show off their new cd players/dictaphones/pagers.

This is because technology (like masturbation) is totally in keeping with the current puritan *zeitgeist*, it's hygienic, solitary, and you can enjoy it in the safety of your own home.

Sex, on the other hand, appears to have little to recommend it. In the context of Aids one would have thought we needed, or deserved, to find sexual satisfaction more than ever before. It promotes a feeling of well-being and erodes our ever-growing sense of isolation. But instead of investing even a tiny portion of our energies into finding positive and safe ways towards sensual fulfilment, the media has gleefully declared sex to be 'over'. Somewhere in our deeply puritan souls we feel we have got what we deserved. And abstinence has been our penance.

At the bottom of this rather depressing mood lies a crisis of faith. First God died, the great horizons of modernism narrowed and darkened, then marxism fell terminally ill. Science and progress have proved false idols. With the collapse of the grand narratives our collective belief systems have taken something of a battering. And we are now so uncertain that our search for a state of grace has turned in on itself.

Hence our obsession with consumption, our fixation on the body. We feel that if we can't control anything else we can at least struggle with our bodies and dictate what

we put into them. We have lost any confidence in our ability to affect change in any but this the most limited and personal of spheres. Our bodies, our battlefields.

In the 60s and 70s, 'the personal is political' was the slogan of change. In the 80s, Thatcherism hijacked the personal, jettisoned the political ('there is no such thing as society'), and re-worked consumerism as the ultimate expression of personal freedom. In the 90s, collective action has been replaced by individual salvation. And we are left with only two political options that can make us feel good about ourselves: 'caring consumption' (changing the world by buying a bottle of Ecover) on the one hand, and self-denial on the other.

Though much fevered debate has accompanied the 80s' phenomenon of acquiring things, very little has been said about giving things up. Maybe that's because they are merely different sides of the same coin. Both focus on individual response and centre around consumption. One on what you *will* consume, the other on what you *won't*. Both console us that we are indeed exercising our power and independence. That we are making a difference. But neither of them facilitates the kind of action that brings about significant change, nor do they help us create links or affect a rapprochement between individual and collective needs. ●

Dangerous Win

The winner of the *Marxism Today* Student Supplement Hazardous Sex Competition was **Jess Harper** from Edinburgh. We asked for five further examples of Hazardous Sex based on Edward Dorn's poem of that name.

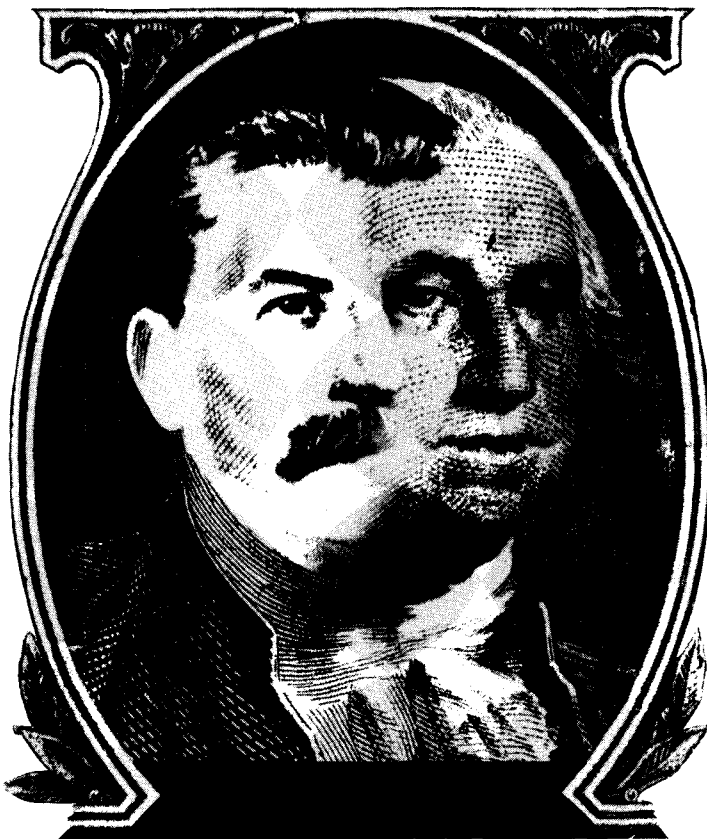
The winning entry:

Sex with a well-hung parliament
Sex using a three-line whip
Sex during full entry into a monetary system
Sex with a Living Marxist (or a lie detector)
Sex with a member from the No Turning Back Group and, at any cost, avoid sex for a fourth term
Jess Harper

The prize collection of New Times books and a copy of Edward Dorn's anthology of poetry, *Abhorrences*, is on its way, along with an annual subscription to *Marxism Today*. ●

Alec Nove on the hard road for the East

Bleak Market



A good and observant correspondent is a most valuable aid to understanding. Roger Boyes is one such. He knows Poland as well as Russia, and appreciates not only the long-familiar inefficiencies of the system of so-called centralised planning, but also the pitfalls in the path of the would-be reformer.

Among the obstacles to marketisation, duly noted by Boyes in **The Hard Road To The Market** (Secker and Warburg, hbk £17.99) is a still widespread hostility to individual enterprise. True, millions have long been making roubles on the side, in a variety of grey or black markets, and top officials (the *nomenklatura*) benefited from privileged access to scarce goods and services. Nonetheless, at least in Russia, would-be entrepreneurs are ill-regarded, not just by bureaucrats but by the public.

Several explanations are advanced. One relates to traditions derived from peasant communal institutions: for centuries anyone who 'included himself out' added to the burdens of his fellows. Also widespread among con-

servative as well as radical intellectuals was a contempt for the mercantile values of Western capitalism, as can be seen in the writings of Dostoevsky, and more recently of Solzhenitsyn. This has been reinforced by 70 years of communist propaganda. And, finally, the highly disordered condition of the economy, the chronic shortages, the many forms taken by black market activities, reinforces the public image of the entrepreneur as engaged in illegitimate enrichment.

The old system, with all its defects, did ensure that most supplies reached the producing enterprises most of the time, though unofficial arrangements were also needed to fill the gaps in the plan. Job security was assured, and with it an indifference to the quality of performance – 'Why bother to work, we will be paid anyway'. Chronic shortages fed corruption, at levels high and low. Even under favourable conditions it would have been a formidably difficult task to convert the (flawed) planning system into a market economy.

But conditions were anything but favourable. No at-

tempt was made to undertake the radical review of prices, without which no market economy could function. A rapidly increasing budget deficit was financed by money creation. The formerly effective control over wages was loosened, so that incomes rose uncontrollably, while goods disappeared from the shops.

The command structure is disintegrating, the political structure too, while there is no real market, or functioning democratic institutions, to replace them. Chaos threatens.

A school of thought has arisen, which has become dominant in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and which is making some headway in the Soviet Union too: there is no 'third way', the alternative to stalinist socialism is Thatcherite capitalism. Speedy privatisation is then the only answer. Much of this intellectual trend is based upon an idealised view of really existing capitalism. It is an understandable reaction to the evident failure of the system, but laissez-faire is scarcely a solution to the real problems of these economies. Their neglect of infrastructure, their very poor record in atmospheric pollution, require remedial action by the state.

The distorted capital structure inherited from the past also requires purposive action: the relevant model could be South Korea and Japan where the state played and plays an important role in investment policy, rather than the free capital market of the text books. Besides, where is the needed capital to come from, in the absence of large, legitimately acquired private fortunes? It is also remarkable that ideas of workers' self-management, and even participation, are being jettisoned in the rush to 'Chicago'.

Boyes is aware of such difficulties and contradictions. There is, in his view (and in mine) a viable combination of plan and market, one that gives substantial scope for private and co-operative entrepreneurship, which permits a flourishing private

sector. The ruthless imposition of a 'shock therapy', as in Poland, has certainly eliminated shortages in the shops, but the severe deflationary measures have sharply reduced both the level of real wages and of production, while unemployment is rising rapidly. A rush to a free market, as Boyes points out, can be destabilising politically. One wonders how long the Polish workers will continue to bear the heavy burden of sacrifice thrust upon them by the chosen therapy. Boyes sees some sort of free market, capitalism maybe with a human face, as the only effective alternative. But how to get there?

In Poland and Hungary, nationalism can act as a unifying force. In the multinational Soviet Union it is another matter. Baltic, Georgian, Ukrainian, Uzbek nationalisms, a virtual shooting war between Armenians and Azerbaijanians, are disrupting Moscow's efforts to achieve orderly change, or a modest degree of financial stability, while some of the Russian nationalists see 1917 as a disaster, and assert that it is all the fault of the Jews.

Perhaps the biggest threat to order and reform in the Soviet Union is the loss of legitimacy and of power by those supposedly in charge. To travel 'the hard road to the market' needs firm guidance as well as a well-defined strategy. Gorbachev, and many of his associates, still speak of being committed to a 'socialist choice' and to the principles of the October revolution, even while accepting some form of radical market-type reform. They have to act in a confused, often corrupted, distorted environment, threatened by public disorder and hyperinflation.

Boyes' book is very good in describing the disorders, the malfunctioning and the corruption. Thereby he helps us see just how complicated (and controversial) is the task of devising and enforcing a coherent radical reform programme. The immediate prospects are not bright.●

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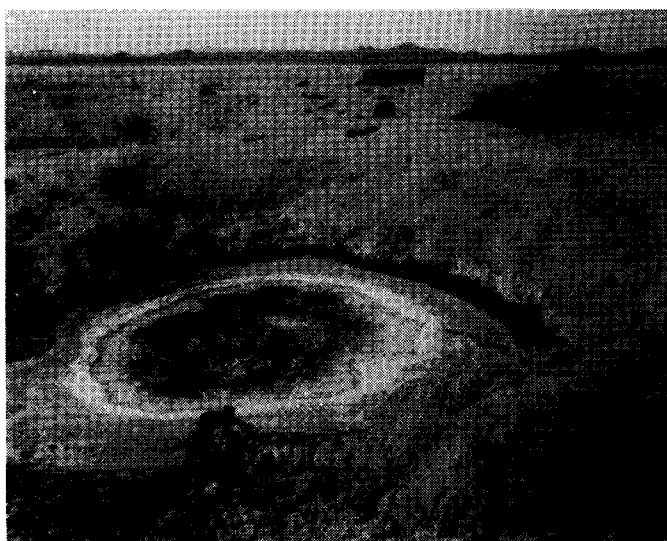
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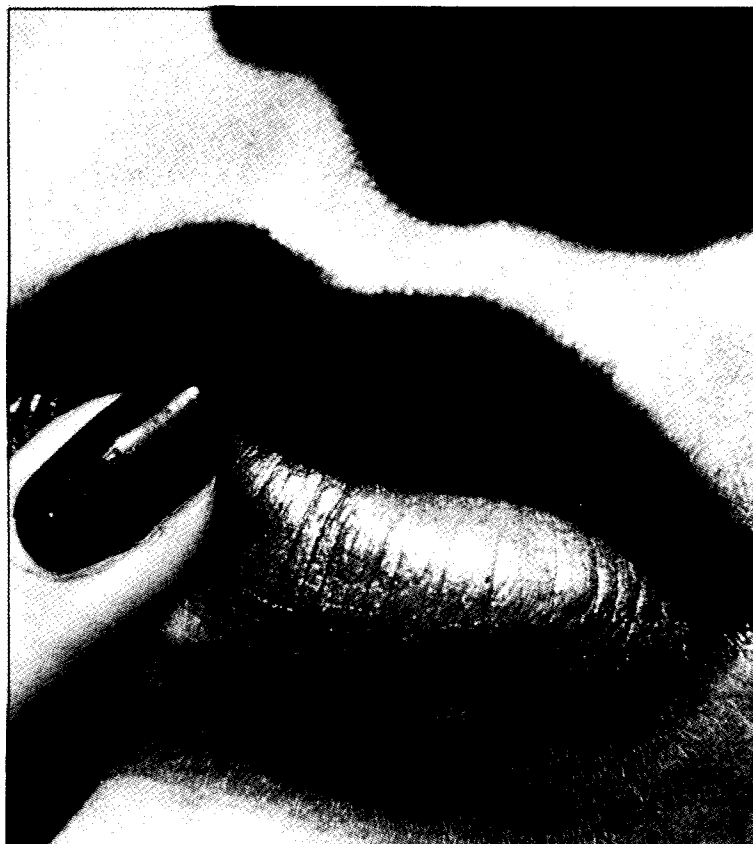
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BOOKS

Suzanne Raitt on poetry and desire

Strains Of Love



Love can seem at times a dubious pleasure. And it is its dubiousness, as much as its pleasure, that is celebrated in this anthology of women's poetry, appearing close on the heels of John Fuller's **Chatto Book Of Love Poetry**. **The Virago Book Of Love Poetry** (Virago, pbk £6.99), edited by Wendy Mulford, makes a virtue out of editorial idiosyncrasy (Mulford emphasises that 'the editors have not tried to be fair or representative'), and this makes for a collection that is at times irritating and even baffling.

But probably this is how it should be. The editors wanted to 'deconstruct the love poem as such', and often, searching for our own experience in these pages, we are frustrated, aware of how much is lacking not only from this book, but also from love itself.

There are all sorts of unexpected inclusions here, like Blaga Dimitrova's poem about her mother ('Her skinny hand/pulls mine into the dark'), and Anne Stevenson's about her child. But this rich diversity cannot drown out the anger and the disappoint-

ment of Anna Akhmatova's 'You Thought I Was That Type', or Georgia Johnson's 'The Heart Of A Woman'. Reading so much about love, one cannot help wondering what women ever had to gain from it. Perhaps the topography of anger and resentment simply makes more impression than the contours of satisfied desire, found in Sylvia Townsend Warner's beautiful but static 'Drawing You, Heavy With Sleep'.

It is sad to feel this way, even though there are consolations, like Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea's poems to her husband. But, in a collection informed, as Mulford tells us, by its editors' feminist commitment, contradiction and a lack of easy answers are inevitable. The matter-of-fact mingling of lesbian and heterosexual erotic poetry is to be applauded: here lesbian love is welcomed without comment into what has been at times an oppressively short-sighted tradition. Its presence is a part of the eclectic aims of this volume: nobody and, just as importantly, no feeling must be left out.

But not all feelings are love; and not all writing spread irregularly on the page is poetry. We wonder about art as well as about affection. Where do we draw the line? Every reader will find some poems whose presence here seems intrusive, on aesthetic or emotional grounds. The volume is uneven, its provocativeness not always under control. It should perhaps have had a stronger argument, a less eccentric way of proceeding; and we might then have learnt something out of the ordinary about love and politics.

For in spite of all the differences so carefully in relief here (differences of nationality, of race, of class, of sexuality), there is a curious monotony weighing down this book. Too many of the poems are contemporary, free verse rhapsodies or polemics, for there to be

much spice in the reading of it. We feel very strongly the personal taste of the editors, the pressure to include more, and often more of the same.

It could be, too, that to have a considerable number of poems in translation deadens the language in the collection. In a book largely about bodies and sexual love, not to have all the poems in their original incarnations triggers another set of frustrations. To leave them out might have been equally a deprivation, but reading love in translation makes us feel even more hollowly at a distance.

Yet it is because of such feelings – of remoteness, of absence, of fright – that we are always so hungry for more: more love, more feelings, more ways of saying it. Many of the sins of *The Virago Book Of Love Poetry* are also its virtues: rather like love itself, in fact. ●

Nicholas Lezard says goodbye to the brat pack

Self And Co

What has Margaret Thatcher done for the British novel – or, more specifically, the talent of the *enfants terribles* who we all thought were going to rescue it? Until we learnt that She was mortal, it looked like she had personally seen it off. Now we know that she only presided over its disappearance. Do you remember that chilling moment when she revealed that she was reading *The Fourth Protocol* for the second time? That's what she thought of literature.

The 80s began with some hope that the decade was going to be an exciting one for fiction. Some hope. Looking at the Booker winners gives us a clue. True, Salman Rushdie got it in '81 with *Midnight's Children*, but then the monumentally untalented Thomas Keneally lucked out in '82 with a book that wasn't even fiction. Martin Amis's *Money* never even made the shortlist, but Martin Amis's money was a fabulous consolation. Of course the Booker, apart from weird hiccups like Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* (1985), has

always been crippled by gentility. It was the ungentle authors we had to look to for deliverance. And, for a while, they delivered.

Adam Mars-Jones's *Lantern Lecture* (1981) glittered with promise and intelligence. The *Times Literary Supplement*, approvingly and equally perceptively, labelled him a punk. (In one story, the Queen catches rabies from one of her own corgis.) *Money* itself brought us the gross John Self, farting, eating, snorting, drinking and wanking his way through civilisation. It wasn't a pretty sight; if the word 'awesome', in the Californian sense, gives us a purchase on the phenomenon. If ever there was an unconstructed Thatcherite, it was J. Self. Sensitive readers found him too much to handle but many had a soft spot for him. This might have been his fall.

A sensibility bruised by the spirit of the age might have made Amis, and the author most often mentioned in the same breath, Ian McEwan, turn from their seedy heroes and appropriate voi-

ces that would telegraph their concerns more obviously. The next time Amis junior turned to full-scale fiction in *London Fields*, he told it all through soppy Samson Young, a dying writer obsessed by the beauty of babies' eyes, but pathetically unaware that his creator was involved in a shabby deceit: while you listened to the dewy-eyed man on the doorstep (the fate of the earth! All those nice babies! Those terrible nuclear bombs!) a stunted sidekick had slipped in the house and was spraying misogynist, snobbish graffiti all over the place. (It was his tv appearance that did it. When Amis announced that the streets of Notting Hill were 'seething with riot' – by which he meant that he felt uncomfortable carrying his tennis racket down the Portobello Road – we saw what had been latent in his fiction all along. Fans turned apostate.)

As for McEwan: *The Comfort of Strangers*, an empty, threatening book, has been turned into an empty, harmless film. And *The Child In Time* was a seductively-written hippy anti-abortion tract, its author duped into believing the essential fiction of fatherhood (as pointed out mercilessly in Adam

Mars-Jones's *Counterblast, Venus Envy*. Oh, Adam: why haven't you written a novel?). The book was still technically brilliant in parts, but not even that could be said for *The Innocent*. A low-key spy yarn of intelligent mediocrity, with some free gruesome bits thrown in. The critical hoopla that welcomed it demonstrated just how easily the reviewers could be persuaded to welcome a name, rather than a talent.

Publishing gossip can help crystallise your response to a book in a way that criticism can't: so remember *London Fields* went to the publishers with strict instructions not to change a syllable, and *The Innocent* secured an advance of £250,000 (all together now: a quarter of a million beer vouchers for that?).

And Mrs Thatcher herself? How did the novelists treat her? Apart from a few token sneers in the brief mania publishers had for yob fiction, nothing much. She was too bizarre a character for all but the most undaunted writers to try to tackle. A cameo appearance as Mrs Torture in a book by Salman Rushdie called *The Satanic Verses*. I hear it's awfully good. Try to get hold of a copy when it comes out in paperback. ●

Malcolm Rutherford on a change of heart for the CP

Turning Point

Perhaps I am naive, but I find it absolutely astonishing that the records of some crucial meetings of the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1939 – now published as **About Turn: The Communist Party And The Outbreak Of The Second World War** (Lawrence and Wishart, hbk £34.95), edited by Francis King and George Matthews – should have been sent directly to Moscow without so much as a summary, let alone a copy, being retained at the party headquarters in Britain. I find it much less surprising that the records should have fallen into the hands of the British intelligence agency, MI5.

How MI5 got hold of them is

not clear. But as Monty Johnstone points out in his introduction to this book, the fact that the British Government knew what was going on is revealed in the 1943 war cabinet papers in the public record office. MI5 was actually more aware of what was going on at the top of the CPGB than the Party's own members.

It is the exclusive consignment of the records of the top party meetings to Moscow that gives everything else away. If you are not prepared to keep an account of what was said for yourselves and your own supporters, but do entrust the verbatim records to the Soviet Union, you sacrifice any claim to

independence, whether national or individual. It means supporting Moscow right or wrong, because it has become axiomatic that Moscow is always right.

Actually, it was worse than that. It was not supporting the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that mattered for the CPGB in 1939; it was supporting Stalin. True, the full extent of Stalin's excesses was learnt only later, but enough was known at the time to make him a pretty suspect figure. Some of the ordinary decent communists must have read Malcolm Muggeridge's accounts of the Soviet Union in the *Manchester Guardian*. And in the autumn of 1939, even by his own standards, it was a remarkable feat of acrobatics that Stalin was asking the CPGB to perform.

You could just about accept the Nazi/Soviet pact on the grounds that it might postpone a German attack on the Soviet Union when the communist empire was still inadequately prepared to defend itself. Diplomatically, the non-aggression pact might have been seen as rather an astute move. Metternich would probably have approved of it. The CPGB went along with it.

It was something else again, however, to ask the CPGB suddenly to accept that there was no difference between Hitler and Chamberlain and therefore to oppose not only the war against Nazism, but also the defence of Poland as an independent state. Some years before 1939, it had been argued that there was no significant distinction between the two forms of the 'dictatorship of the bourgeoisie': the democracy of (say) Britain and France, and the most authoritarian and arbitrary regime in Germany. Yet as 1939 approached and Hitler's delinquencies became more blatant, it seemed reasonable that there should be a pact between communism and the bourgeois democracies against fascism.

That was precisely what Stalin proposed to wreck when he ordered the CPGB and other western commun-

ist parties to treat Hitler and Chamberlain as two of a kind. The language used through his intermediaries was quite brutal. Clearly he would have no qualms, to put it mildly, if Poland ceased to exist. He thought that the capitalist powers – Germany and the bourgeois democracies – would knock each other out. The result would be to make the world safe for communism.

Such were the demands with which the CPGB was confronted in 1939 after the war against Hitler had been declared. You could read this book as a record of brave resistance. Some members, such as William Gallacher, the Scottish shop steward, did oppose. Possibly the majority were opposed, both in their head and in their heart. But if the basis of your political credo is that the

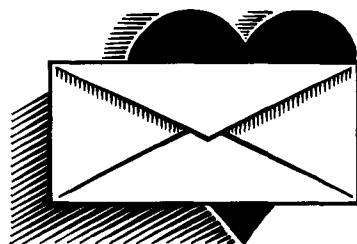


CPSU must be right, then you go along in the end.

This book is the record of the debate, finally released by Moscow. It shows that there was considerable heart-searching before the wrong decision was taken. And when Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941 the decision was, of course, reversed. Nevertheless, the subservience to Moscow was to continue for many years. It is intriguing to reflect what might have happened if Britain had had a more independent communist party in the years before communism as a whole gave up the ghost. ●

Classifieds

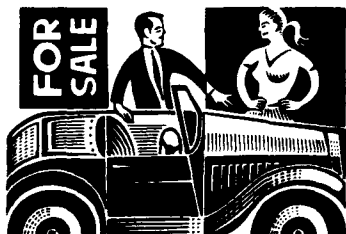
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EVENTS

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- **Lesbian Current Affair.** A new CR/discussion group for lesbian feminists who have lived through old times and who want to develop an understanding of new times. To meet in North London on Tuesdays - beginning 27th November 1990. More information contact Carol: 081-806-2367.

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For further details contact Bill Inne CPGB, Leeds TUC Club, Savile Mount, Leeds LS7 3HZ. 0532 626343.

● **Manchester: "The Euroconference".** Manchester Marxism Today Group is organising this major European day of discussion. British speakers including David Marquand join leading international figures from Germany, Italy and elsewhere. The event takes place at Manchester Town Hall, Saturday February 23rd. Details from 061-445 6333/061-434 8930.

● **New Times '91: A series of six evening discussions on the main concepts of New Times,** starts February 14th. To be held in North London. Details from 28, Wargrave Avenue, London N15. Organised by Haringey MT Group.

● **Sexuality event: Major day event** to be held on Saturday July 13th in London. The organising group would welcome offers of help and ideas. For details write to North London MT Forum, 28 Wargrave Avenue, London N15 6UD.

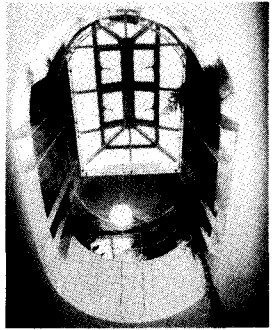
● **Cardiff: Active Marxism Today Group** continues to meet each month. Details from Peter Davies on (0222) 227255.

● **"Women's Workshop on Gulf Crisis"** A feminist initiative. All day January 20th. Information 071-608 0929.

● **Haringey: "After Thatcherism".** Discussion meeting to review the aftermath of the Tory leadership crisis and Labour's prospects. Tuesday January 22nd, 7.45pm at Hornsey Library, Haringey Park, Crouch End, London N8. Organised by Haringey MT Group, info (081) 809 5068.

● **Gramsci 100: Seminar to mark the centenary of Gramsci's birth** with Ernesto Laclau, Anne Showstack Sassoon, Andrew Gamble, David Forgacs and others. All day, Saturday January 26th, start 9.30am. At the Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7. Tks £8/£4 (unwaged), from 152 Stapleton Hall Rd, London N4. Tel: (081) 348 8915. Organised by North London MT Forum.

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Jeremy Paxman

What newspapers do you take? All the broadsheets, *Spectator*, *London Review Of Books*, *Granta*, *Index On Censorship*, *The Economist*.

What foreign languages do you speak? French and Spanish poorly.

What is your all-time favourite film? *Chinatown*.

When do you listen to music? When travelling and occasionally when not.

When was the last time you prayed? Last week.

What was your first thought this morning? I've overslept.

What is the most common colour in your wardrobe? Blue, it goes with anything.

What is your favourite meeting place? The Walmer Castle in W11 for friends. The Gay Hussar restaurant in W1 for business.

What is your worst piece of architecture? Almost any Arndale Centre and the redeveloped centres of those cities which succumbed to the 1960s developers.

Who do you reveal your secrets to? My girlfriend, but infrequently.

What makes you feel secure? A warm bed on a cold night.

How regularly do you consult your horoscope? About once a month, sceptically.

What was the first lesson you learnt in life? You shouldn't feed worms to baby brothers.

What is your earliest memory? The night of the birth of my younger brother.

What is your greatest regret? Not being musical.

You're driving through a hot, desolate expanse. What's playing on the stereo? *The Sanctus* from Gounod's Mass for St Celia.



Jeremy Paxman was born in Yorkshire in 1950. He was educated in Worcestershire and then attended Cambridge University, where he edited the university's newspaper. He has worked as an award-winning reporter for BBC television since 1977 on various programmes, including *Panorama* and *Breakfast Time*, and is now a presenter of BBC2's *Newsnight*. His second book, *Friends In High Places*, was published in September and was based upon his research of the British establishment. He lives in London.

Which is your city of the 90s? Prague.

Where do you wish you were living? Exmoor, Sutherland or Radnorshire, where I could farm sheep.

How has your diet changed in the past ten years? I seem to

eat less, but it shows more.

What physical exercise do you do? Cycling, walking and swimming.

Who was/is the greatest intellectual influence on your life? George Sayer, my English teacher at school.

Do you really need your car? I sold it years ago.

Which charity do you support? Oxfam, Notting Hill Housing Trust, Action Aid and the Samaritans.

What is your favourite advertisement? Carling Black Label – the surfer ad.

What are you doing for the environment? The usual things, inadequately.

What part of this life would you recycle into the next? None. I would miss the rest of the old, or I would adulterate the new.

Who do you respect? Jonathan Swift, for having a sense of proportion.

What do you no longer believe in? Mature reflection.

What would you die for? Love, faith or hope.

What do you now own that you had never dreamt of owning? A life-sized imitation of Tutankhamun with exaggerated ears.

What is the most amount of money you've spent on an item of clothing? £250 on a suit.

What hi-tech device scares you? None scare me, but plenty make me feel inadequate.

How much time do you spend each day on the phone? Hours.

Under what circumstances would you support censorship? To save life.

Complete this sentence: If I were dictator for a day... I'd give anarcho-minimalism a go.

How much more do you want to achieve? Lots, but I've never had a plan, so I can't be specific.

What does being a European mean to you? Being close to history. ●

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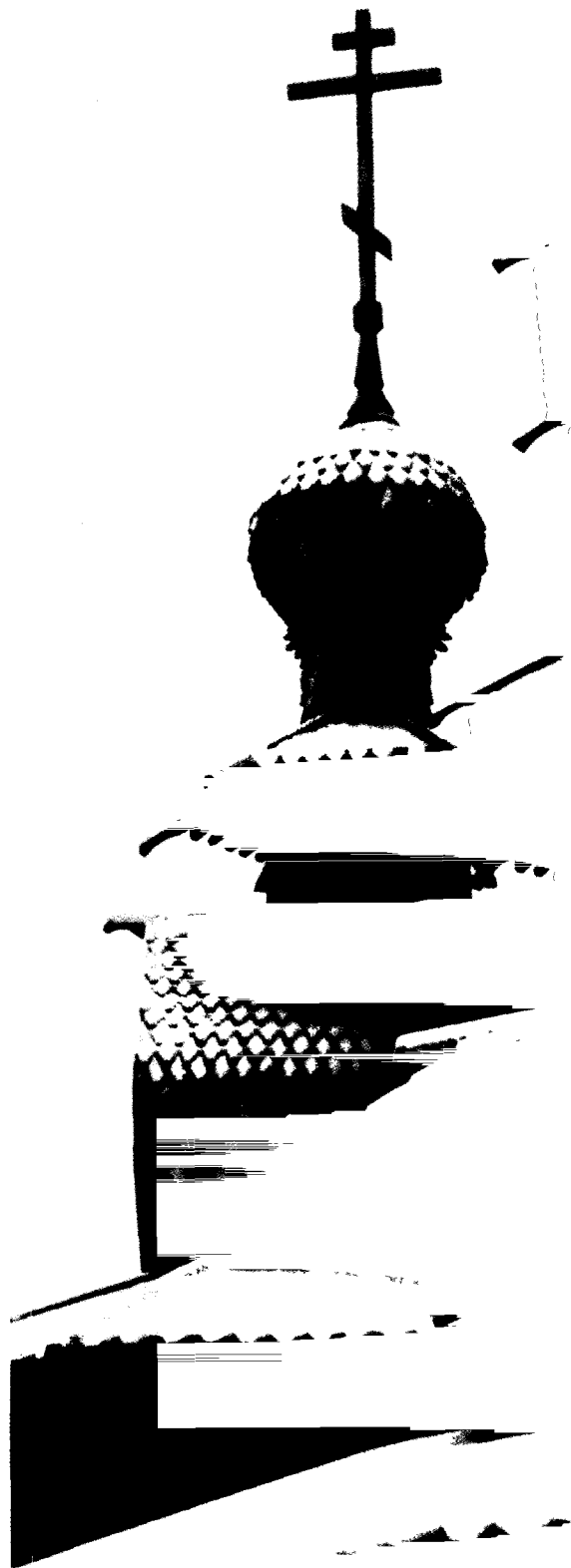
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